

THE
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
OF
SANTILLANE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by A. DONALDSON and J. REID.
For A. DONALDSON, and J. WOOD.
MDCCLXIV.



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THE

THE
HISTORY
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.

Gil Blas, not knowing how to digest the vitious manners of the actresses, quits Arsenia's service, and gets into a more creditable family.

A Small spark of honour and religion, which, notwithstanding so great a corruption of manners, was still left unextinguished in me, made me resolve not only to leave Arsenia, but at the same time to break entirely with Laura, whom yet I could not help loving, though I very well knew how faithless she was to me. Happy the man who can thus make a right use of the cool moments of reflection, which now and then break in upon the pleasures that too much ingross him! One morning, therefore, I pack-

ed up my awls, and without making up my accounts with Arsenia, who indeed hardly owed me any thing, or taking leave of my dear Laura, I bid adieu to that house which was full of nothing but debauchery. I had no sooner done so good an action, than Heaven rewarded me for it. I happened to meet the steward of the late Don Matthias my master. I saluted him. He remembered me, and asked me who I belonged to. I told him, that I had at that instant quitted my place; that, after having staid almost a month with Arsenia, whose way of living I could not approve, I had now left her of my own accord, that my innocence might not be tainted. The steward, as if he too had been of a mighty tender conscience, commended me for what I had done, and told me, that, since I had such principles of honour in me, he himself would put me into a very advantageous service. He fulfilled his promise, and placed me that very day in the family of Don Vincent de Guzman, whose manager was one of his acquaintance.

I could not have got into a better family. Neither, in the end, did I repent my having served in it. Don Vincent was a very rich old gentleman, and had lived several years without either wife or law-suit; he was deprived of his wife by means of the doctors, who sent her to the other world by the physic they gave her to cure her of a cough, of which she might still have been in possession, if she had not come under their hands. Instead of looking out for a second wife, he thought of
nothing

nothing but the education of his only daughter Aurora, who was then entering into her six and twentieth year, and who might really be called an accomplished lady. Together with no common beauty, she was mistress of a great deal of wit, and had spared for no pains to cultivate it. Her father was a man of no very bright parts: but he had the happy talent of managing his affairs with prudence. He had one fault, which is pardonable enough in an old man: he was very narrative, and loved to talk, especially of wars and battles. If any body unluckily touched upon this string in his presence, he immediately clapped the heroical trumpet to his mouth, and happy were the audience if they came off for the relation of two sieges and three battles. As he had spent two thirds of his life in the service, his memory was an inexhaustible fountain of exploits, which nobody heard with so much satisfaction as he related them. Add to this, that he stammered horridly, and was very prolix; which generally made his stories disagreeable enough. But, taking him altogether, I have known few lords of so fair a character. He was of an even temper. He was neither obstinate nor whimsical; which is pretty extraordinary in a man of quality. Though he was a good oeconomist, yet he lived very honourably. His servants consisted of several footmen, and three women that waited upon Aurora. I soon found that Don Matthias's steward had put me into a good place, and all my care now was how to keep it. I applied

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myself to know how squares stood: I studied the inclinations of every body in the house; and by regulating my conduct in this manner, I soon gained my master's favour, and the love of all the domestics.

I had been about a month with Don Vincent, when I began to fancy that his daughter distinguished me from all the servants in the house. Every time her eyes happened to fix upon me, I thought I perceived in them a certain complaisance, which I could not find in the looks she cast upon the others. If I had not lived among fops and players, I should never have taken it in my head to imagine, that Aurora had any kind thoughts of me: but those gentlemen had almost spoiled me; for with them the most virtuous lady in the world must not expect much more mercy than the most vitious. "If we may believe some of those buffoons," said I to myself, "your women of quality have their whims and freaks as well as other people, if a man does but know how to make a right use of them. How can I tell but my mistress may be subject to them, as well as the rest of her sex? But no," added I immediately, "it can never be so with her. She is none of those Messalina's, who, forgetting the dignity of their birth, unworthily throw away their regards upon a dunghill, and, without sense of shame, bring an eternal blot upon their honour. She is rather one of those young ladies who are tender hearted, though strictly virtuous, and who taking the utmost freedoms that modesty will allow

allow of, make no scruple of entertaining and inspiring a delicate passion, that may amuse them without danger."

This was the opinion I had of my mistress, though I did not well know what to think on't. Mean time, whenever she saw me, she never failed to give me a smile, or some other token of her being pleased with me. A wiser man than myself would have been ensnared by such fair appearances as these. I could not, for the soul of me, help giving credit to them. I fancied Aurora was violently smitten, and I began to take myself for one of those fortunate domestics, whose servitude is by love made easy and pleasant. That I might in some measure appear less unworthy the happiness my good fortune intended to procure me, I began to be more careful and nice about my person than I used to be. I laid out all the money I could rap and run in linen, washes, and essences. The first thing I did in a morning, was to prink up and perfume myself, that I might not be unprepared, if I had any occasion to appear before my mistress. With this, and other airs which I gave myself, I flattered myself that my happiness was not very far off.

Among Aurora's women, there was one called *Ortiz*. She was pretty old, and had lived above twenty years in Don Vincent's family. She had brought up his daughter, and still retained the quality of duenna; though she no longer performed the odious duty of one. On the contrary, instead of being a

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spy upon Aurora's actions, as she was formerly, she now made it her business to conceal them. One evening, Dame Ortiz, having found an opportunity of speaking to me in private, told me with a low voice, that, if I were wise and secret, I should come into the garden about midnight, and that I should there be informed of some things which I should not be sorry to know. I squeezed the old woman's hand, and made answer, that I should not fail to be there; and so we parted immediately, for fear of being surprised. How tedious did the moments seem from thence till supper, though we supped very early, and from supper till my master went to bed! I thought every thing in the house was done ten times slower than ordinary. To plague me still more, when Don Vincent retired to his chamber, instead of thinking of sleep, he fell to fighting over again his Portuguese battles, which he had before dinned me on the ears with a hundred times. But what he had never told me, reserving it till that night, was the name of every particular officer that had distinguished himself by any thing remarkable. Nay, he told me every exploit they had performed. I had hardly patience to listen to him. However, at last he put a stop to his larum, and went to bed. I flew to my little apartment, through which was a pair of back-stairs, that led to the garden. I rubbed my body all over with essences. I put on a clean shirt, which I soundly perfumed; and having forgot nothing that might contribute to heighten my mistress's

mistress's affection, away I went to the place of assignation.

I did not find Ortiz there, as I expected to do. I supposed, that having staid for me till she was quite weary of waiting any longer, she was retired to her chamber, and that so the critical minute was past. Upon this, I began to wish Don Vincent at the devil; but, as I was cursing his wars and campaigns, I heard it strike ten. I thought the clock went wrong, and could not persuade myself that it was less than one in the morning. But I happened to be deceived on the right side; for a full quarter of an hour afterwards, I counted ten by another clock. "Very well," quoth I to myself; "I have now no more nor less than two swinging hours to dance attendance. However," thinks I, "they cannot complain of me for not being punctual. What shall I do with myself till twelve? I will e'en take a walk in this garden, and study the part I am to play in the scene that is approaching. It is quite new to me, I have not yet been accustomed to the crotchets of women of quality. I know well enough what is to be done with a common wench or an actress. You accost them with an air of familiarity, and so come immediately to the point; but another conduct is to be used with a woman of fashion. There, I suppose, the gallant must be all politeness, complaisance, tenderness, and respect, though not too timorous neither. Instead of going about to hasten his happiness

by

by the violence of his transports, he must wait with patience for the moment of weakness."

These were my arguments; and this rule I resolved to follow in my conversation with Aurora. I comforted myself as well as I could with the hopes of seeing myself shortly at the feet of that adorable object, and saying a thousand passionate things to her. I called to mind all those scraps of plays which I thought might be of service in our conference, and increase her good opinion of me. I concluded, that I should certainly apply them properly; and hoped to pass for a wit, like some players of my acquaintance, though all the wit I had was a good memory. In these thoughts, which amused me more agreeably than my master's warlike relations, I heard the clock strike eleven. Upon this I took heart, and fell again to my reverie, sometimes walking, and sometimes sitting down in a green arbour at the end of the garden. At length, twelve o'clock, the hour so long expected, came to my relief. Some moments after it had struck, Ortiz, as punctual, though not as impatient, as myself, appeared. "Signior Gil Blas," cried she, "how long have you been here?" "Two hours," replied I. "You were resolved, I see," said she laughing, "not to be too late. There is some pleasure in having an assignation with you. And indeed," continued she with a more serious air, "you can never make a sufficient return for the good fortune I come to bring you. My mistress has a mind to talk with you in private. I shall say no more.

more. The rest is a secret that you must hear from no mouth but her own. Follow me: I will carry you to her apartment." With this, the duenna took me by the hand, and through a little door, of which she had the key, brought me privately into her mistress's chamber.

C H A P. II.

The reception Aurora gave Gil Blas, and the discourse that passed between them.

I Found Aurora in a deshabille. I saluted her very respectfully, and with as much grace as I was able. She received me with a smiling air, made me sit down by her, notwithstanding all my excuses, and bid her ambassadress go into the next room. After this prelude, which had no ill luck: "Gil Blas," said she to me, "you must needs have perceived that I behold you with more favour and distinction than any other servant of my father's: and though my looks had not informed you that I have some kindness for you, the step I have this night taken ought to convince you of it entirely."

I did not give her time to proceed. I thought, that, as a man of gallantry, I was obliged to exempt her modesty from the confusion of expressing herself more fully. I rose up transported, and throwing myself at Aurora's feet, like a theatrical hero that claps one knee to the earth before his princess, I cried out in a vehement tone, "Ah, Madam, is it
then

then possible that Gil Blas, hitherto the foot-ball of fortune, and the outcast of the creation, should have had the happiness to inspire you with sentiments"—— "Don't speak so loud," interrupted my mistress laughing; "you will wake my maids, who are asleep but in the next room. Rise, take your seat again, and hear me out, without cutting me short any more. Yes, Gil Blas," continued she with a graver countenance, "I bear you a great deal of good-will; and to give you a proof of my esteem, I am going to intrust you with a secret, upon which depends the repose of my whole life. I am in love with a young cavalier, who is very handsome, very well made, and of a noble family. His name is *Don Lewis Pacheco*: I see him now and then in public; but have never yet spoke to him. I do not know what character he has in the world, nor what vices he may be guilty of: now, that is the thing I desire to be informed in. I shall want some body to inquire carefully into his manner of living, and to give me a faithful account of what he discovers. I chuse you for this purpose: I am confident I may safely charge you with this commission. I hope you will acquit yourself of it with so much address and discretion, that I may not repent of having placed my confidence in you."

Here my mistress was silent, expecting what answer I should make to what she said. I was at first a little confounded at having the change put upon me so disagreeably; but I soon

soon recovered myself, and having overcome the shame with which a piece of temerity that proves unsuccessful is always attended, I testified so much zeal for my lady's interest, and devoted myself to her service with so much warmth, that if I did not bring her to think herself deceived, when she imagined I had flattered myself so far, as to fancy her in love with me; at least, I convinced her, that I knew how to make amends for a foolish action after I had committed it. I asked but two days time, to give her a full account of Don Lewis. After this, she called Ortiz, who led me back into the garden, and said to me at parting, "Good-night, Gil Blas; I need not put you in mind of coming soon enough to the place of appointment: I too well know how punctual a man you are in things of this nature."

I returned to my chamber, not without some vexation at seeing myself so baulked. However, I had so much sense as to reflect, that it better agreed with my condition to be my mistress's confident than her lover. I considered, that this might come to be of some profit to me; that love-brokers are generally well rewarded for their pains; and so I e'en went quietly to bed, with a resolution to do whatever Aurora should command me. I went out about this affair the very next morning. The house of so noble a cavalier as Don Lewis was not hard to find. I inquired about him in the neighbourhood; but the persons I applied to, could not fully satisfy my curiosity. This obliged

liged me to renew my search again next day. I was then more successful. I happened to meet a fellow of my acquaintance: we stood to talk a little. At that moment there passed by a friend of his, who accosted us, and told us he was just turned out of the service of Don Joseph Pacheco, Don Lewis's father, for a tierce of wine which he was accused of having stolen. I did not let slip so fair an opportunity of informing myself in every thing that I wanted to know; and I asked so many questions, that I returned home, hugely pleased at my being able to keep my word with my mistress. The next night was the time when I was to see her again at the same hour, and in the same manner as before. I was not now so uneasy as I was then, and was so far from hearing my old master's stories with impatience, that I myself brought upon the board the subject of his campaigns. I waited for twelve with the most philosophical tranquillity in the world, and it was not till I had heard it strike by several clocks, that I went down into the garden, without either essences or perfumes about me: that trouble too I spared myself.

At the place of rendezvous I found the punctual duenna, who maliciously upbraided me with having slackened my diligence. I made no reply, but followed her to the apartment of Aurora, who immediately asked me if I had inquired thoroughly into Don Lewis's character. "Yes, Madam," said I; "and will in two words tell you what I have heard.

First

foremost, you must know, he is shortly to return to Salamanca, in order to finish his studies. He is a cavalier of great honour and probity: as for courage, being a gentleman and a Castilian, it is not possible he should want it. Furthermore, he has a good deal of wit, and is of a very engaging behaviour: and lastly, (which you will go near to think the worst part of the story), he is too much of the temper of most of our young noblemen; he is a devilish rake. Would you think it? As young as he is, he has already had two actresses in keeping." "What do I hear," cried Aurora? "What a character is this! But, Gil Blas, are you sure he is so licentious?" "That I do not in the least doubt of, Madam," replied I. "A servant, whom they turned away this morning, told it me; and servants are generally pretty sincere and plain, when they are telling their masters faults. Besides, he herds with Don Alexio Segiar, Don Antonio Centelles, and Don Fernando de Gamboa. That one thing is a plain demonstration of his looseness." "It is enough, Gil Blas," said my mistress sighing: "I am resolved to overcome my unworthy affection. Though it has already taken root too deeply in my heart, yet I do not despair of tearing it out. There," said she, putting into my hand a purse that you may imagine was not empty, "take that for your trouble: have a care of revealing this secret; and remember that I have depended entirely upon your silence."

I assured my mistress, that she might be entirely at ease, and that I was the very * Harpocrates of confidents. After this assurance, I retired, impatient to know what there was in the purse. I found in it twenty pistoles. Upon this, thinks I, if Aurora pays so well for ill news, what would she have done, had the account I brought her been such as she desired? I began to repent that I did not imitate the lawyers, who generally in their verbal processes conceal the real matter of fact. I was sorry I had nipped in the bud an intrigue that might have proved so gainful to me: but, however, I had the consolation to see myself reimbursed the charge I had so foolishly been at in perfumes and essences.

C H A P. III.

Of the great revolution that happened in Don Vincent's family; and what a strange project love put in Aurora's head.

SOME little time after this adventure, Signior Don Vincent fell sick. Had he been much younger than he was, the symptoms of his illness were so violent, that there was reason to apprehend some fatal event. The moment it took him, the two most famous doctors in Madrid were sent for. One was called *Dr Andros*, and the other *Dr Oquetos*. They examined the patient with great attentiveness, and, after an exact observation, they both agreed that the humours were in a ferment; but they could agree in nothing else.

* The God of silence among the Egyptians.

“ I find it speedily necessary,” said Andros, “ to purge the humours, though crude and raw, while they are yet in a violent agitation, as it were of flux and reflux, lest otherwise they should fix upon some of the noble parts.”

Oquetos, on the other hand, maintained, that they ought to stay till the humours were concocted before they made use of purgation.”

“ But your method,” replied the first, “ is directly contrary to that of the prince of physic. Hippocrates advises us to purge in the most violent fever in the beginning of it; and says, in so many words, that we should be sure to purge speedily, when the humours are in *orgasm*, that is to say, while they are in a fermentation.” Ay, that is what deceives you,” replied Oquetos: “ Hippocrates, by the word *orgasm*, does not mean a ferment, but a concoction of the humours.”

And now our doctors grew warm. One quotes the Greek text, and brings in all the authors that explain it as he does; the other, relying upon a Latin translation, outbawls his adversary. Which of their advices should we take? Don Vincent, for his part, had no skill in the dispute. However, finding himself obliged to make choice of one, he fixed upon him who had dispatched most patients, I mean, the oldest: and immediately Andros, who was the junior, turned tail and marched off, not without casting some reflections upon his senior about the word *orgasm*. Oquetos then got the day. As he followed the principles of Dr Sangrado, he began his work by fetch-

ing half the blood out of my master's body, meaning not to purge him till the humours were concocted; but Death, who, I suppose, was afraid that a purgation so wisely deferred, would rob him of his prey, was beforehand with the concoction, and carried off the patient. This was the end of Signior Don Vincent, who lost his life, because his doctor did not understand Greek.

Aurora having buried her father in all the pomp that his birth and quality required, took upon her the administration of his estate. Being now mistress of herself, she turned off some of her servants, with a reward suitable to their good service, and retired to a seat which she had upon the banks of the Tagus, between Sacedon and Buendia. I was one of those whom she retained, and who went with her into the country. I had the good fortune to become necessary to her. Notwithstanding the faithful account I had given her of Don Lewis, she still loved that cavalier; or rather, not having been able to vanquish her affection, she gave herself up entirely to it: could now talk freely to me without fear or precaution. "Gil Blas," said she to me sighing, "I cannot forget Don Lewis: do what I will to drive him from my thoughts, he continually offers himself to them, not such as you have described him to me, plunged in vice and disorder; but such as I could wish him, tender, passionate, and constant." In saying these words, she could not help shedding some tears, which had like to have set me a-crying too:

I was moved at seeing her weep. I could not have made my court to her better, than by appearing concerned at her uneasiness. "My good friend," continued she, after having wiped her charming eyes, "I see you are of a very tender nature, and I am so well pleased with your zeal, that I am resolved to reward it. Your assistance, my dear Gil Blas, is now more necessary than ever. I will tell you the project I have formed: I believe you will think it a very whimsical one. Know then, that I design to set out as soon as possible for Salamanca. There I mean to disguise myself like a cavalier, and, under the feigned name of *Don Felix*, get acquainted with Pacheco. I will endeavour to win his friendship and his confidence: I will talk to him often of Aurora de Guzman, whose relation I will pass for. Perhaps he will desire to see her, and that is what I drive at. We will have two lodgings at Salamanca: in one, I will be Don Felix, in the other, Aurora; and by appearing before Don Lewis, at one time in the habit of a man, and at another in my own, I hope I may by little and little draw him into my snare. I own," added she, "my project is somewhat extravagant; but my love runs away with my reason, and the innocence of my intentions makes me quite blind to the folly of so rash an enterprise."

I confess I was very much of Aurora's opinion, as to the rashness of her design; but, however unreasonable I thought it, I resolved not to play the pedagogue. On the contrary,

I fell to gilding the pill, and undertook to prove that this wild project was no more than a piece of harmless wit. This pleased my mistress to the heart: lovers would have their most idle thoughts approved and flattered. We no longer looked upon this undertaking as any thing else but a comedy, which we were to play as well as we could. We chose our actors out of our own family, and then distributed the parts. All this passed without any clamour or quarrelling, because we were not actors by trade. It was resolved that Dame Ortiz should act Aurora's aunt, by the name of *Donna Chimena de Guzman*; that she should have a man and a maid; and that Aurora herself, in the dress of a cavalier, should have me for her valet de chambre, and one of her women, disguised like a page, to wait upon her in private. The characters thus regulated, we returned to Madrid, where we heard that Don Lewis still remained, but that he was very shortly to go to Salamanca. We got our acting cloaths made with all the speed we were able. When they were done, my mistress had them neatly packed up, because they were only to be wore in time and place. At length committing the care of her house to her steward, she set out in a coach drawn by four mules, and took the road to the kingdom of Leon, with all those servants who had any part to act in this comedy.

We had now traversed all Old Castile, when the axle-tree of the coach broke: we were then between Avila and Villafior, about three

or

or four hundred paces from a castle, which we could see at the foot of a mountain. Night approached, and we were very much at a loss what to do. But there happened to pass by a countryman, who gave us some comfort. He told us that the castle which we saw before us, belonged to Donna Elvira, the widow of Don Pedro de Pinarez, and he gave us so handsome a character of that lady, that my mistress sent me to the castle, to beg a lodging for that night. Elvira did not belie the countryman's report. She received me with a very gracious air, and gave me the answer we desired. We all went to the castle, whether our mules with a slow pace dragged the coach. At the gate we met Don Pedro's widow, who came out to receive my mistress. I shall pass over the compliments they made each other upon this occasion. I shall only say, that Elvira was a lady pretty well advanced in years; but she was very well bred, and knew how to do the devoirs of hospitality, as well as ever a woman in the world. She led Aurora into a very rich apartment, where leaving her to take a little repose, she came and had an eye to see that we too had every thing that was necessary. Afterwards, when supper was ready, she ordered it to be served up in Aurora's chamber, where they both sat down to it. Don Pedro's widow was not one of those who think they perform the honours of a table to admiration, in assuming a grave thoughtful air. Her humour was gay and pleasant, and her conversation very agreeable.

She

She expressed herself very genteelly, and in choice terms. I could not help admiring her wit, and the ingenious turn she gave to her thoughts. Aurora appeared as much charmed with it as I was. They contracted a friendship with each other, and made a reciprocal promise to hold a correspondence by letters. As our coach could not be mended till next day, so that we were likely to set out very late, if we went then, it was agreed we should stay at the castle till the day following. We the servants were in our turn treated with all manner of profusion, and our beds proved not a whit worse than our entertainment.

The next day my mistress found new charms in Elvira's conversation. They dined in a great hall adorned with several fine pieces of painting. Among the rest there was one which was drawn in an exceeding masterly manner, but the story of it was very tragical. In it was described a dead cavalier, lying upon his back, all weltering in his blood; but, dead as he was, he had a haughty menacing air. Near him was a young lady in another posture, though she too was extended upon the ground: she had a sword plunged into her breast, and was just giving up the ghost; she fixed her dying looks upon a young man who seemed to be stung to the heart with grief at the loss of her. The painter had likewise brought into his piece, another figure, which did not escape my attention. It represented an old man, of a very handsome presence, who looked at the bloody sight which lay be-

fore

fore him, with no less concern than the young man. These dreadful images seemed to strike them both with the same sorrow, but they received the impressions of it each in a different manner. The old man was immersed in a profound affliction, and seemed as if he were quite overwhelmed with it: whereas there was a sort of fury mixed with the grief of the young man. All these things were painted so boldly that we could have admired them for ever. My mistress asked what story this picture represented. "Madam," answered Elvira, "it is a too true description of the misfortunes of my family." This reply was a spur to Aurora's curiosity, and made her so desirous of being farther informed, that Don Pedro's widow could not help promising her that satisfaction. This promise, which was made before Ortiz, her two companions, and myself, kept us all four in the hall after dinner was ended. My mistress would have sent us out of the room; but Elvira, who perceived that we longed to know the meaning of the picture, was so obliging as to bid us stay, telling us, that the story she was going to relate did not at all require secrecy. And immediately afterwards she began in these terms.

C H A P. IV.

The marriage out of revenge.

A N O V E L.

Roger, King of Sicily, had one brother and one sister. His brother, called
Mainfroy,

Mainfroy, rebelled against him, and raised a war that was very bloody and violent ; but he had the ill fortune to lose two battles, and fall into the hands of the king, who inflicted no other punishment upon him, but the loss of liberty. This clemency only got *Rogero* the name of a barbarous tyrant among one part of his subjects. They said that he spared his brother's life, with an intent to torture him with a more slow and inhuman revenge. All the rest, with more grounds, imputed the hard usage he suffered in prison to his sister *Mathilda*. That princess had indeed always hated the prince, and never gave over persecuting him till he died. She died soon after him, and her death was looked upon as a just punishment for her unnatural cruelty.

Mainfroy left two sons behind him. They were but yet in their infancy. *Roger* was somewhat tempted to rid himself of them by violent means, lest, when they were grown up, the desire of revenging their father should excite them to assemble a party, which was not so utterly depressed, but that it was still in a condition to give the state new troubles. He communicated his design to the senator *Leontio Siffredi*, his prime minister, who, in order to dissuade him from it, did himself undertake to educate Prince *Henriquez*, who was the eldest, and advised him to trust the youngest, who was called *Don Pedro*, to the constable of Sicily. *Roger*, being persuaded that these men would instil into the minds of his nephews the submission which they owed him,

him, intrusted to them their care, and kept his niece, Constantia, in his own hands. She was much about the age of Henriquez, and was the Princess Mathilda's only daughter. He allowed her women to attend her, and masters to instruct her, and spared for no care in her education.

Leontio Siffredi had a castle two short leagues from Palermo, in a place called *Belmont*. There it was that he applied himself to render Henriquez one day fit to mount the throne of Sicily. He soon observed such amiable qualities in the young prince, that he was as careful of him, as if he himself had had no children. Yet he had two daughters. The eldest, called *Blanch*, who was younger by a year than the prince, was perfectly beautiful; and the younger, named *Porcia*, who by her birth caused her mother's death, was yet but in the cradle. Blanch and Prince Henriquez felt a love for each other, as soon as ever they were capable of loving; but they were not permitted to converse together in private. However, the Prince did now and then find an opportunity to do it. He knew so well how to make the best of those precious moments, that he prevailed upon Siffredi's daughter to permit him to put in execution a project he had cast in his mind. Just about that time, Leontio happened to be sent by the king into one of the remotest provinces of the whole island. During his absence, Henriquez had an opening made in the wall of his apartment, which answered directly to Blanch's chamber.

chamber. This opening was covered with a sliding pannel of wainscot, which was so nicely fixed in the ceiling, that no eye could perceive the artifice. A very able architect, whom the Prince had engaged in his interests, did the work with as much speed as secrecy.

By this means the amorous Henriquez got often into his mistress's apartment: but he did not abuse her goodness. If she was so imprudent as to grant him a private entry into her chamber, she did it however upon the assurances he gave her that he would never ask any favours but what were innocent and lawful. One night he found her very uneasy. She had heard that Rogero was dangerously ill, and that he had sent for Siffredi, as chancellor of the kingdom, to make him the depository of his last will. She already represented to her own imagination her dear Henriquez upon a throne, and fearing she should lose him when in so high a rank, she was in the greatest trouble and confusion. When he appeared before her, her eyes were drowned in tears. "What, weeping, Madam?" said he to her: "How am I to interpret the sorrow in which I see you?" "My Lord," replied Blanch, "I cannot hide my fears from you. The king, your uncle, will shortly be no more, and you must fill his throne. When you consider how much your new greatness will set you above me, I own it gives me some uneasiness. A monarch sees things with another eye than a lover; and that which was the utmost of his wishes, when he knew the

was a power superiour to his own, touches him but weakly when he sees himself placed in so high a rank. Whether it be instinct or reason, I find such storms in my heart, as cannot be calmed by all the confidence which is due to your goodness. I do not distrust your firmness; I only distrust my own fortune." "Adorable Blanch," answered the Prince, "your fears are very obliging, and justify the love I bear you; but the excess to which you carry your diffidence, does not only shock my love, but, if I may be so bold as to say it, even the esteem you owe me. No, no; do not think that my destiny can ever be separated from yours. Believe rather that you shall forever be my only joy, and my only happiness. Dispel these vain alarms. Why should they disturb such gentle moments?" "Ah! my Lord," replied Blanch, "when you are crowned, your subjects will perhaps demand a queen descended from a long race of kings, one by whose marriage you may add new countries to your present dominions; and perhaps, alas! you will answer their expectations, even at the expense of your own desires." "What can make you so fond of tormenting yourself," answered Henriquez, with some warmth, "as to look into futurity for an afflicting thought? If heaven takes the King my uncle to itself, and makes me master of Sicily, I here swear to give you my hand, in my capital Palermo, and in the presence of the whole court: and I attest whatever we esteem most sacred to be witness of my oath."

Henriquez's protestations made Siffredi's daughter take heart again. The rest of their discourse was about the king's illness. In this Henriquez shewed the sweetness of his temper. He grieved for his uncle's fate, though he had so little cause to be concerned at it; and the force of blood made him bewail a prince, whose death promised him a crown. But Blanch did not yet know all the misfortunes that threatened her. The constable of Sicily, who had met her at the chamber-door one day, when he came to the castle about some important affairs, was struck with her beauty. The next day he asked her in marriage of Siffredi, who gave his consent; but the king's sickness happening much about this time, the match was deferred, and Blanch had as yet never heard a word of it.

One morning, just as Henriquez had dressed himself, he was surprised to see Leontio enter his apartment followed by Blanch. "My Lord," said that minister "the news I bring will, I believe, give you some affliction; but the consolation with which it is attended ought to moderate your grief. The King your uncle is dead: his death has left you heir of his sceptre. Sicily is now under your dominion. The grandees of the kingdom wait at Palermo for your commands. They have deputed me to receive them from your own mouth; and I come, my Lord, with my daughter to pay you the first and sincerest homage, which is due to you from your new subjects." The Prince, who knew that

Roger

Roger had for about two months been seized with a fit of illness, which by little and little wasted him away, was not at all surpris'd at this news. Nevertheless, being struck with so sudden a change of his condition, he found a thousand confused motions rising up in his heart. He remained thoughtful for some time, and then breaking silence, he spoke to Leontio as follows: "Wise Siffredi, I have always looked upon you as my father. It shall be my glory to conduct myself by your counsels, and you shall in effect be King of Sicily more than myself." At these words, going to a table upon which was a standish, and taking a blank sheet of paper, he writ his name at the bottom. "What is your meaning, my Lord," said Siffredi to him? "To give you a proof of my acknowledgment and esteem," replied Henriquez; and giving the paper to Blanch, "Receive, Madam," said he, "this pledge of my faith, and of the power I give you over me." Blanch took it with a blush, and made the Prince this answer: "My Lord, I receive these favours with all the respect that is due to my King: but I depend upon a father, and therefore I beg leave to put this paper into his hands, that he may do with it whatever his prudence shall direct."

With these words she gave Henriquez's signature to her father. Then Siffredi observed what till that moment had escap'd his penetration. He found how the Prince's sentiments lay, and therefore said to him; "Your Ma-

jesty shall have no cause to blame me. I will not abuse the confidence"——“My dear Leontio,” interrupted Henriquez, “you can never abuse it. Whatever use you make of that paper, I shall approve of it. But,” continued he, “I would have you return to Palermo; prepare what is necessary for my coronation, and tell my subjects, that I will follow you very speedily to receive their oaths of fidelity, and to give them fresh assurances of my affection.” The minister obeyed the orders of his new master, and set out with his daughter for Palermo.

Some hours after their departure, the Prince too left Belmont, more wrapt up in the thoughts of his love, than with the throne which he was going to take possession of. When he made his entry into the city, nothing was to be heard but shouts of joy, and he went amidst the acclamations of the people to the palace, where every thing was already prepared for the ceremony. He there found the Princess Constantia dressed in long robes of mourning. She seemed very much grieved for the loss of Roger. As they owed each other a reciprocal compliment upon the death of that monarch, they both acquitted themselves of it with a great deal of wit; but with a little more coldness on the side of Henriquez than on that of Constantia, who, notwithstanding the enmity between their families, could not tell how to hate that prince. He placed himself upon the throne, and the Princess seated herself on one side of him,
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upon an elbow-chair which stood something lower than his. The grandees of the kingdom took their places, each according to his rank. The ceremony began; and Leontio, as chancellor, and depositary of the late king's testament, having opened it, read it through with an audible voice. The substance of this act was, That Roger, seeing himself without children, named the eldest son of Mainfroy for his successor, on condition he married the Princess Constantia; but that if he refused her his hand, he should be set aside, and the crown go to his brother the Infant Don Pedro, upon the same condition. Henriquez was strangely surpris'd at these words: they gave him an inexpressible uneasiness; and this uneasiness was made still greater, when Leontio, after having made an end of reading the will, said aloud to the whole assembly, "My Lords, having made known to the present King his late Majesty's intentions, this generous prince consents to honour his cousin the Princess Constantia with his hand." At these words, Henriquez interrupted the chancellor. "Leontio," says he, remember the writing which Blanch"—

"My Lord," interrupted Siffredi, without giving the King time to proceed, "here it is. The grandees of the kingdom," continued he, shewing the note to the whole assembly; "will see by this writing the esteem your Majesty has for the Princess, and the deference you shew to the late King your uncle." Having said these words, he read over the writing

ting in the terms with which he himself had filled it up. By it the new King did, in the most authentic manner, make a promise of marriage to Constantia, conformable to Roger's intentions. The hall resounded with shouts of joy: "Long live our noble King Henriquez," cried every body there present. As the aversion which the Prince had always shewn for the Princess, was commonly known to the whole kingdom, they were justly afraid that he would oppose the condition of the will, and so set the nation in a flame. But the reading of the note dispelling all those fears, caused those general acclamations, which in secret gave a thousand wounds to the King's heart.

Constantia, who both by her love and honour was more concerned in this joy than any body else, took this time to pay the King her acknowledgments. The King, notwithstanding his utmost efforts, could not help receiving the Princess's compliment with uneasiness; his disorder was so great, that he could not so much as give her such an answer, as even in common civility he ought to have done. At length, not being able to contain himself any longer, he drew near to Siffredi, who by the duty of his office was obliged to be by him, and said to him in a low voice: "What are you doing, Leontio? The paper which I gave to your daughter was not intended for this purpose. You betray"——
"My Lord," interrupted Siffredi once again, with a bold voice, "consider your own glory.

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If you refuse to obey the will of the King your uncle, you lose the crown of Sicily." He had no sooner said this, than he went away farther from the King to avoid an answer. Henriquez remained in an inexpressible disorder. He found himself torn with a thousand contrary thoughts. He was enraged at Siffredi. He could not resolve to give up Blanch; and being divided between his love and his honour, he stood a great while in suspense what to do. At last he came to a final determination, and reckoned he had found a way to preserve Siffredi's daughter, without renouncing the throne. He pretended to submit entirely to Roger's will, intending, whilst a dispensation for his marriage with his cousin was soliciting at Rome, to win over the grantees of the kingdom, and fortify his power so strongly, as to be in a condition absolutely to refuse to obey the conditions that were imposed upon him.

So soon as he had formed this design, he grew more calm, and turning towards Constantia, confirmed what the chancellor had before read to the whole assembly. But in the very moment that he was betraying his own thoughts so far as to promise her his faith, Blanch entered the hall. She came by her father's command to pay her devoirs to the Princess; and the first thing that struck her ears, was the words with which Henriquez promised Constantia his hand. To add to all this, Leontio, that she might not doubt her misfortune, presented her to Constantia, saying,

ing, "Child, pay your homage to your Queen. Wish her the joys of a flourishing reign, and a happy marriage." This dreadful blow quite overwhelmed the unfortunate Blanch. In vain she endeavoured to hide her concern. Her colour went away and returned several times successively, and all her body trembled. Yet the Princess did not suspect any thing. She ascribed the confusedness of her compliment to the perplexity of a young person educated in a desert, and not used to a court. But it was not so with the young King. The sight of Blanch made him change countenance, and the despair which he observed in her eyes put him beside himself. He did not doubt but she judged by appearances, and so concluded him faithless. He would have been less uneasy, could he have found an opportunity of speaking to her; but how was that possible, when all Sicily had their eyes fixed upon him? Besides, the cruel Siffredi deprived him of all hopes of doing it. That minister, who could read the sentiments of those two lovers in their faces, and was desirous to prevent the mischiefs which the violence of their passion might bring upon the state, had the cunning to take his daughter out of the assembly, and carry her with him to Belmont, in a resolution to hasten her marriage as fast as possible, for several reasons.

When they were come thither, he acquainted her with all the horror of her destiny. He declared to her, that he had promised her to
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the Constable. "Just Heaven!" cried she in a transport of grief, which even her father's presence could not restrain, "to what unheard-of wretchedness do you reserve the unfortunate Blanch!" This transport was so violent, that all the faculties of her soul were suspended by it: her body seemed to be frozen; and becoming as pale as death, she dropped down in a swoon in her father's arms. He was moved with the condition in which he saw her. Yet, though he was very sorry at her being so uneasy, he stuck firm to his resolutions. Blanch at length returned to herself, more by means of the sharpness of her grief, than by the water which Siffredi sprinkled in her face; and when at the opening her eyes in a languishing manner, she beheld his care to assist her: "My Lord," said she in a voice that could hardly be heard for sighs, "I am ashamed to let you see my weakness; but death, which must certainly come in a short time to end all my torments, will soon deliver you of an unhappy daughter, who has been so bold as to dispose of her heart without your consent." "No, my dear Blanch," replied Leontio; "there is no fear of your dying; your virtue will soon reassume its empire over you. The Constable's alliance is an honour to you. He is the most considerable match in the kingdom."—"I have a very great esteem for his person and merit," interrupted Blanch; "but, my Lord, the King had given me hopes"—"Daughter," interrupted Siffredi in his turn, "I know as much
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of that matter as you can tell me. I am not unacquainted with your tenderness for that prince, nor should I disapprove of it in other conjunctures. I should even be zealous to procure you Henriquez for a husband, if his own honour, and that of the nation, did not oblige him to marry Constantia. But upon this condition alone it is, that the late King made him his successor. Would you have him prefer you to the crown of Sicily? I myself am not a little grieved to see this misfortune fall upon you; but since there is no resisting our destiny, I would have you once for all make a generous effort. What a stain would it be to your glory, to let the whole kingdom observe that you have flattered yourself with vain expectations! Your passion for the King would set malicious tongues a-prating; and the only way to hinder it, is to marry the Constable. In short, Blanch, you have no time left you to deliberate. The King gives you up for a throne: he marries Constantia. The Constable has my promise: I beg you would disengage it; and if, to prevail upon you, there is a necessity for me to make use of my authority, I command you to do it."

Concluding with these words, he left her to reflect upon what he had said. He hoped that when she had duly weighed the arguments he had made use of to help her virtue to get the better of her passion, she would of herself resolve to take the Constable for a husband. He was not deceived: but what did it cost the miserable Blanch before she could
take

take this resolution ? She was in a condition that would have drawn pity from the hardest heart. The affliction of finding her fears of Don Henriquez's infidelity turned into certainties, and of being forced not only to give over all thoughts of him, but also to marry a man whom she could not love, caused in her heart such violent pangs of grief, that every moment brought new torments along with it: " If my misery is certain," cried she, " how can I resist it and live ? Pitiless destiny, why did you feed me with such soothing hopes, if you still meant to precipitate me into an abyss of misfortunes ? And thou, perfidious lover, how dar'st thou give thy hand to another, when thou hadst promised me eternal fidelity ? Hast thou so soon forgot the faith you have sworn to me ? But, to punish thy deceit, grant heaven that the conjugal bed which thou art about to stain with thy treachery, may give thee nothing but remorse, instead of pleasure ! May Constantia's embraces fill thy false heart with mortal poison ! May thy marriage become as gloomy and dismal as mine ! Yes, traitor, I will marry the Constable, whom I hate, to be revenged upon myself ; to punish myself for having chosen thee for the object of my foolish passion. Since my religion forbids me touching my wife, the days that I have yet to live shall be but one unhappy chain of trouble and sorrow. If thou still preservest for me some small particle of love, I shall be revenged by throwing myself into the arms of another before thy perfidious face ;

face; and if thou hast entirely forgot me, Sicily may at least boast that she has produced one woman, who had the courage to punish herself for having too carelessly disposed of her heart."

In such a condition, this melancholy victim of love and duty spent the night which preceded her marriage with the Constable. Siffredi finding her next day resolved to obey his commands, made what haste he could to take her while she was in this temper. He sent for the Constable to Belmont that very day, and married him secretly to his daughter, in the chapel of the castle. What a day was this to Blanch? She was not only obliged to renounce a crown, to lose a darling lover, and marry one she abhorred; but she was also forced to put a constraint upon her thoughts before a husband who was naturally jealous, and who loved her above all things. The Constable, overjoyed at his happiness, was always at her feet. He did not so much as give her the poor consolation of bewailing her misfortunes in secret. When night came, Leontio's daughter found her affliction increase every moment more and more. What was it then, when her women, having undressed her, left her alone with the Constable? He asked her kindly what was the cause of the dejection she seemed to be in. This question perplexed Blanch, who pretended she was ill. Her husband at first believed her; but he soon had other thoughts. As he was really uneasy at the condition in which he saw her

and pressed her to go to bed, his instances, which he construed to his disadvantage, presented to her mind so distracting an image, that, not being able to restrain herself any longer, she gave a free course to her sighs and tears. What a sight was this for a man who thought himself now at the top of his wishes? He no longer doubted but his wife's affliction concealed some fatal secret. However, though his thoughts reduced him almost to as deplorable a state as Blanch herself, he had strength enough to hide his suspicions. He redoubled his assiduities, and pressed her more and more to go to bed, assuring her that he would suffer her to take all the rest she had occasion for. Nay, he offered to call her women to her, if she thought their assistance would alleviate her illness. Blanch, taking courage upon this promise, told him, that sleep was all she wanted in her present weakness. He pretended to believe her. They both went to bed, and spent the night very differently, from what two lovers that are joined in affection, as well as marriage, are used to do.

Whilst Siffredi's daughter gave herself up to grief, the Constable was studying what could be the cause of his being so unhappy. He easily imagined, that he had a rival; but when he endeavoured to guess who it should be, he lost himself in the multitude of his own ideas. He only knew, that he was the most unfortunate of mankind. He spent two parts in three of the night in these agitations, when a hollow noise struck his ear. He was

very much surprised to hear somebody tread slowly along the room. He fancied he must be mistaken : for he remembered he himself had shut the door, after Blanch's women were gone out of the chamber. He drew the curtain, that his eyes might be witness of the cause of the noise he heard ; but the light which was left in the chimney was gone out. Soon afterwards he heard a voice call *Blanch* several times in a feeble and languishing tone. Then his jealous suspicions made him almost mad with fury ; and his honour obliging him to rise, in order to prevent an injury, or be revenged for it, he took his sword, and went towards the place whence the voice seemed to come. He found a naked sword clash with his own. He advances : the other retired. He pursues : the other gets away from his pursuit. He searches for him who seemed to fly from him, in every corner of the room, as well as he could in the dark ; but can find no more of him. He stands still : he listens a while, but can hear nothing. What an enchantment was here ! He goes to the door, fancying that the secret enemy of his honour might have escaped that way ; but that was shut and bolted as before. Not knowing what to make of all this, he called some of his servants that lay nearest him ; and as he opened the door to make them hear him the better, he stood in the midst of it upon his guard, for fear the person he looked for should escape him. At his call, some of the servants ran to him with candles in their hands ; he takes a
light,

light, and makes a new search in the chamber, his sword drawn. Yet, notwithstanding all his diligence, he could find nobody, nor no sign of any body's having been there. He could discover no private door, nor any other passage for a man to get in at. Yet he was well assured, that his ears had not been deceived. He still remained in a strange confusion of thoughts. To have recourse to Blanch, would have been in vain; it was too much her interest to disguise the truth, for him to expect the least information from her. He therefore chose rather to open his heart to Leontio; and so sent away the servants, telling them he thought he had heard a noise in the room, but found he was deceived. He met his father-in-law coming out of his apartment at the bustle he had heard, and made him a relation of what had happened, with all the disorder and affliction that it is possible to imagine.

Siffredi was amazed at what he heard. Though he did not think such an accident natural, yet he believed it to be true; and judging the King's love to be capable of any thing, he was very uneasy at it. But, however, he was so far from adding to the jealous suspicions of his son-in-law, by telling him his own, that he represented to him, with an air of confidence, "That the voice he imagined he had heard, and the sword which he thought he had clashed with, could be nothing but the phantoms of an imagination disturbed with jealousy: that it was impossible

any body should have been in his daughter's chamber; that as for the melancholy which he observed in her, it might really be caused by some little indisposition: that her honour ought not to be condemned for the weakness of her constitution: that change of condition to one who had always lived a retired life, and saw herself suddenly delivered up to a man whom she had not had time to know, and to love, might occasion those tears, those sighs, and that affliction, of which he complained: that it was time and assiduity must kindle love in the heart of a woman of birth: that he would have him calm his uneasiness, and redouble his tenderness, in order to make Blanch give ear to his affection; and therefore he advised him to return to her, and believe, that her virtue was such as would not admit of any suspicion."

The Constable made no answer to these arguments; and either did indeed begin to fancy, that in the disorder of his mind he might be mistaken; or else thought it better to dissemble, than vainly to endeavour to convince the old man of an accident so void of probability. He returned to his wife's apartment, went to bed again to her, and endeavoured to get some respite from his cares, in the arms of sleep. Blanch, on her side, the sorrowful Blanch, was not a whit more at ease. She had but too plainly heard the same things that her husband did, and could not ascribe to her imagination, an adventure of which she knew the secret and the motives. She was surprised

surprised that Henriquez should come into her chamber after having so solemnly given his faith to the Princess Constantia. Instead of being pleased with this attempt, or receiving any satisfaction from it, she looked upon it as an additional affront, and was but the more enraged.

Whilst Siffredi's daughter was prejudiced against the young King, and thought him the most guilty traitor upon earth; that unhappy prince, still more entangled in her charms than ever, was impatient to speak with her, that he might convince her how unjust she was in judging of him by appearances. He would have come sooner to Belmont for this purpose, if his affairs would have permitted; but he could not, till that night, get away from court. He too well knew every corner of the place in which he had been brought up, to find any difficulty in stealing privately into Siffredi's castle; besides, he had still the key of a back-door that let into the garden. This way he passed into his old apartment, and so into Blanch's chamber. You may easily imagine how much he was amazed to find a man there, and to feel a sword clash with his. He had much ado to contain himself from punishing that moment the audacious wretch, who durst lift his sacrilegious hand against his King: but the complaisance he owed to Leontio's daughter, suspended his resentment. He went out in the same manner he came in, and took his way to Palermo, in greater trouble than ever. He arrived there some

moments before day, and shut himself up in his apartment. He was too much disturbed to think of repose. He thought of nothing but returning once more to Belmont. His safety, his honour, and, above all, his love, would not suffer himself to defer an eclairsissement of the circumstances of such an accident.

As soon as it was day, he commanded his hunting-equipage to be got ready, and, under pretence of that diversion, rode deep into the forest of Belmont with his huntsmen, and some of his courtiers. For some time he followed the sport close, the better to conceal his design; and when he saw every body in earnest pursuit of the game, he turned aside by himself, and rode to the castle of Belmont with such speed and impatience, that he had in a moment run over all the space of ground which parted him from the person he adored. He was studying for some plausible pretence to speak with Siffredi's daughter in private, when crossing a little narrow road which led to one of the gates of the park, he perceived sitting near the place where he was, two women, in discourse with each other, at the foot of a tree. He did not doubt but these persons belonged to the castle, and was therefore in some emotion at the sight of them; but he was in a much greater disorder when one of the women turning her head, at the noise of a horse's tread, he beheld his dear Blanch. She was retired a little way from the castle with Nisa, the maid in whom she placed the greatest confidence, and came thither to have, at least,

least, the pleasure of bewailing her misfortunes at freedom.

He ran, he flew to her feet, and was very much grieved to see in her eyes all the signs of a deep affliction. "Adorable Blanch," said he, "suspend your sorrow till you have heard what I have to say. I own, appearances make me seem guilty; but when you know the design I have formed for your sake, what you think a crime, will appear to be a proof of my innocence and the excess of my love." These words, which Henriquez thought were sufficient to moderate Blanch's affliction, made it ten times more violent than ever. She would have answered, but her sobs rose so fast, that they stopped up the organs of her voice. The prince, surpris'd at this excess of grief, said to her; "What, Madam, will nothing calm your uneasiness? What have I done to forfeit your confidence, when I hazard my crown and life to keep myself yours?" At length Leontio's daughter, with the utmost difficulty, made answer; "My Lord, your promises are at present unseasonable: nothing now can join my destiny to yours." "Ah, Blanch," cried Henriquez, "what do I hear? Who can ravish you from me? Who dares stand up against the fury of a King, who would rather set the whole nation in a flame, than see himself deprived of all his hopes?" "Your whole power, my Lord," replied Siffredi's daughter in a languishing voice, "is not able to remove the obstacles that part us. I am the Constable's wife."

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“The Constable’s wife!” cried the prince, starting back. He was so struck with this blow, that he could say no more. His strength left him. He dropt down at the foot of a tree, which was behind him. He trembled, and turned pale, and had no faculty at liberty, but that of his eyes; which he fixed upon Blanch in such a manner, as shewed but too plainly the sense he had of this irreparable misfortune. She, on her side, looked upon him, with an aspect that sufficiently informed him her trouble was very little short of his; and these two unhappy lovers kept a silence which had something in it very dreadful. At length the prince, with much ado, recovering from his disorder, cried out with a sigh: “Ah, Blanch, what have you done? You have ruined me, and yourself too, by your credulity.”

Blanch was angry at the prince’s seeming to throw the blame upon her, when she thought she had such undeniable proofs of his guilt: “What, my Lord,” replied she, “do you add dissimulation to your infidelity? Would you have me belie my eyes and ears, and think you innocent, in spite of their evidence? No, my Lord, I own I am not capable of so great a conquest over my reason.” “But yet, Madam,” answered the King, “those evidences which you think so certain, are what have imposed upon you. They themselves assisted to betray you; and it is no less true, that I am innocent and constant, than that you are the Constable’s wife.” “Fie, my Lord,”

Lord," replied she, "did not I hear you confirm the promise of your hand and heart to Constantia? Did not you assure the grandees of the kingdom, that you would obey the late King's will? and did not the Princess receive the homages of your new subjects, in quality of your wife, and their queen? Now, were my eyes deceived? Say, say rather, faithless as you are, that you did not think Blanch fit to be put in the scale against a crown; and without debasing yourself so far, as to pretend to a passion which is now dead, or perhaps was never alive in you, confess that you thought the Sicilian throne more secure with Constantia, than with Leontio's daughter. You are in the right, my Lord: I no more deserved a crown than I did the heart of so great a prince as you. I was too vain to dare to pretend to either, but then you ought not to have kept me in that error of mine. You know the alarms I had of your ruin, which I thought infallible, if you adhered to my interest. Why did you argue against them? Why was you so cruel as to dissipate my fears? I should else have accused my own fate, instead of you; and, however, you would, at least, have still preserved my heart, and hindered me from disposing of my hand, which no other should ever have obtained of me. But it is now too late to justify yourself. I am the Constable's wife; and since this conversation with another man may be a blot on my honour, I beg your Majesty's pardon, if I take leave to withdraw from one whom

whom I am not any longer at liberty to hear."

With these words she went from Henriquez, with all the haste she was capable of, in the condition she was in. "Stay, Madam," cried he; "afflict not thus a prince, who would sooner overturn the throne, which you upbraid him for having preferred to your love, than answer his subjects expectations." "This sacrifice," replied Blanch, "will now do no good. I must be parted from the Constable, before these transports of generosity will be of use. Since I am no longer mistress of myself, it matters not now what disorders you create in Sicily, or to whom you give your hand. If I have been so weak as to suffer my heart to be surpris'd and caught, I shall at least have strength enough to allay its motions, and to shew the new King of Sicily, that the Constable's wife is no longer Prince Henriquez's lover." Saying these words, she entered suddenly with Nisa into the park, which she was now come up to, and clapping to the door, left the prince overwhelmed with grief. He could not overcome the sorrow that Blanch had given him by the news of her marriage. "Perfidious woman," cried he, "I see you have quite lost the remembrance of our engagement. In spite of my oaths and yours, we are separated for ever. The idea I had formed of possessing your charms was then but a vain illusion: ah, cruel Blanch, how dear do I pay for the advantage of having persuaded you to receive my addresses!"

Then

Then the image of his rival's happiness offered itself to his mind, with all the horrors of jealousy; which cursed passion got such ascendancy over him for some moments, that he was ready to sacrifice to his fury the Constable, and Siffredi himself. But reason, by little and little, again calmed the violence of these thoughts. Yet the impossibility wherein he saw himself, of convincing Blanch of his fidelity, almost drove him to despair. He flattered himself that he should soon efface those evil impressions, if he could but discourse with her at liberty. To bring that about, he judged it necessary to remove the Constable out of the way, and therefore resolved to have him seized as a suspicious person, in the present conjuncture of affairs. He gave orders about it to the captain of his guard, who repaired immediately to Belmont, took him into custody about evening, and brought him to the castle of Palermo.

This incident put all the family at Belmont into great consternation. Siffredi went away at that moment, to be security to the King for his son-in-law's innocence, and to represent to him the fatal consequences of such an unjust imprisonment. The King, who indeed expected that Leontio would soon be with him, but was willing to have a free interview with Blanch, before he released the Constable, had expressly commanded that nobody should be admitted to him till next morning; but Leontio, notwithstanding this order, managed so well, as to get into his presence: "My Lord,"

Lord," said he the moment he entered, " if a loyal subject dare complain of his master, I come to complain of you to yourself. What crime has my son-in-law committed? Has your Majesty duly considered the eternal shame with which you cover my family, and the consequences of an action, which may alienate from your interests, the hearts of those who enjoy the highest places in the kingdom?" " I have certain advice," replied the King, " that the Constable holds a criminal correspondence with the Infant Don Pedro." " A criminal correspondence!" interrupted Leontio surprised. " Ah, my Lord, believe it not. No treachery was ever known in the family of the Siffredi: the Constable's being my son-in-law, might be enough of itself to clear him from all suspicion. The Constable is innocent, but it was some private view for which you had him seized."

" Since you speak so plain," replied the King, " I will do so too. How can you condemn me for your son's imprisonment? Have not I ten times more reason to condemn you for your cruelty? You it is, barbarous Siffredi, that have robbed me of my quiet, and reduced me to a condition more miserable than that of the vilest wretch upon earth. For do not flatter yourself that I have taken the resolutions you imagine. My marriage with Constantia is all a fiction." — " How, my Lord," interrupted Leontio, " can you intend not to marry the Princess, after having made her so solemn a promise, in the face of

the whole nation?" "If I do baulk their expectations," answered the King, "you can blame nobody but yourself. Why did you drive me to the necessity of making that promise, since I can never perform it? Why did you fill up with Constantia's name the writing I gave your daughter? You knew very well what I meant by it. Why did you play the tyrant over Blanch's heart, in forcing her to marry a man she could not love? And what right had you over mine, to dispose of it to a princess I abhor? Have you forgot she is the daughter of Matilda, that cruel Matilda, who, trampling upon all the laws of humanity and blood, was the cause of my father's ending his days in a rigorous captivity? And shall I marry her? No, Siffredi, lay aside those hopes. Before Hymen lights his torch for such a match, you shall first behold all Sicily in flames, and its fields overflowed with blood."

"Do not my ears deceive me?" cried Leontio. "Ah, Sir, what a prospect do you shew me? What resolves do I hear? But I am alarmed in vain," continued he in another tone. "You have too great a love for your subjects, to bring such miseries upon them. You will not suffer yourself to be overcome by this foolish passion. You will not tarnish all your virtues, by falling into the weaknesses of the common sort of mankind. If I gave my daughter to the Constable, it was to gain to your Majesty's interests a valiant subject, who by his personal bravery and power in the army

my might defend your cause against Don Pedro. I thought, that, by binding his family to mine, in so close a chain"—“It is that chain,” cried the king, “that fatal chain, which has ruined me. Thou cruel friend to give me a wound so incurable! Did you think I should be obliged to you for strengthening my power, at the expense of every thing that is dear to me? Why could not you leave me to defend my own cause? Have I not courage enough to quell those who dare rise against me? The Constable himself should have found I had, if he had disobeyed me. I well know that kings ought not to be tyrants; that their people’s happiness should be their first care: but are they, therefore, to be their subjects slaves? And when Heaven has once made choice of them to govern, do they forfeit the right which every man has, of disposing of their own affections? If they have not power to enjoy them, as the poorest subject has, take back, Siffredi, the sovereignty which you were so fond of securing, at the expense of my repose.”

“You know, my Lord,” replied Leontio, “that your marriage with the Princess was, by the late King, made the condition of your succeeding to the crown.” “And what right,” answered Henriquez, “had he to make such a law? Did he receive the succession from his brother, King Charles, upon the same unworthy conditions? How could you be so weak, as to agree to such a piece of injustice? For a chancellor, you are very little

tle acquainted with our constitution. In a word, when I promised Constantia my hand, I did it against my will, and am resolved not to stand to the engagement: if Don Pedro, upon this refusal, endeavours to pull me from my throne, our swords alone, without engaging the people in our quarrel, may decide the contest, and shew which is most worthy to reign." Leontio durst not press him any further; but contented himself with begging, upon his knees, his son-in-law's liberty, which he obtained. "Go," said the King; return to Belmont. The Constable shall follow you presently." Siffredi went back directly to Belmont, confident that his son-in-law would be there almost as soon as himself; but he was deceived. Henriquez was resolved to see Blanch that night, and therefore deferred setting the Constable at liberty till next day.

Mean time, the Constable had very melancholy reflections. This imprisonment made him guess at the true cause why this marriage was unfortunate. He abandoned himself, therefore, entirely to his jealousy; and, contrary to the loyalty which had hitherto been so conspicuous in him, breathed forth nothing but revenge and fury, as he rightly imagined that the King would not fail to be with Blanch that night, he begged the governor of the castle to let him out of prison upon an affair of the utmost importance, and promised to render himself up again into his hands the very next morning, before it was light. The go-

vernour; who was one of his creatures, consented the more readily, because he knew that Siffredi had already obtained his liberty; and, to add to the obligation, he lent him a horse to go to Belmont. The Constable being arrived there, tied his horse to a tree; entered into the park by a little door, which he kept a key of, and was so lucky as to get into the castle without meeting any body. He went directly to his wife's apartment, and hid himself in the antechamber, behind a screen that stood there. From thence he thought he might see every thing that passed, and repair suddenly to Blanch's chamber, if he heard the least noise there. Soon afterwards he saw Nisa come out from thence, and go into the little room where she lay.

Siffredi's daughter, who presently guessed at the motive of her husband's imprisonment, imagined he would hardly come that night to Belmont, though her father told her that the King had assured him the Constable should set out soon after him. She did not doubt but Henriquez would make use of such an opportunity, to see and talk with her in private. In this thought, she waited for that prince, to blame him for an action which might have terrible consequences, with respect to her. And, indeed, soon after Nisa was gone, the private door opened, and the King threw himself at Blanch's feet. "For Heaven's sake, Madam," cried he, "do not condemn me, till you have heard what I have to say in my defence. If I imprisoned the Constable, con- sider

sider it was the only means I had left, to obtain an opportunity of justifying myself. This artifice is to be laid wholly to your own charge. Why did you refuse to hear me this morning? Alas, to-morrow your husband will be at liberty, and I must then talk with you no more. Hear me, therefore, this last time. Since the loss of you will make me eternally miserable, grant me, at least, the melancholy consolation of informing you, that I have not drawn this misfortune upon myself by my infidelity. If I made Constantia a promise of my hand, it was because I could not possibly avoid it in the circumstances to which your father had reduced me. I was obliged to deceive the Princess, both for your interest and my own, in order to secure to you the crown and person of your lover. I flattered myself so far as to believe I should succeed in my design. I had already concerted measures to break this engagement: but you have destroyed my labour, and by disposing of yourself upon too slight grounds, have prepared irreparable misery for two hearts, which otherwise might have enjoyed the greatest content in the reciprocal love they bore each other."

He ended these words with such unfeigned marks of the deepest despair, that Blanch began to be moved at it. She now no longer doubted his innocence. At first she was a little rejoiced at it; but afterwards it made the sense of her misfortunes more intolerable than ever. "Ah, my Lord," said she to the

King, "when I consider how Fate has disposed of us, the finding you guiltless increases my torment! Wretch that I am, what have I done? My anger has ruined me. I thought myself deserted, and in my resentment have accepted of the Constable, whom my father presented to me. It is I that am the criminal; it is I am the sole cause of our misery. Alas, then, at the very time when I accused you of treachery, it was I, too credulous fool, that broke all the ties which I had sworn should be eternal! Do you revenge yourself, my Lord, in your turn; hate, hate the ungrateful Blanch." "Forget" — "Is it possible, Madam, for me to hate you?" interrupted Henriquez mournfully: "can I tear from my heart a passion, which even your injustice could not extinguish?" "There is now, my Lord," replied Siffredi's daughter, sighing, "a necessity you should make that effort." — "Shall you yourself be capable of such an effort?" answered the King. "I am not certain I shall quite conquer my affection," replied she, "but I will spare no pains to bring it about." "Ah cruel!" said the prince, "if once you form such a design, you will easily blot from your remembrance the forsaken Henriquez." "What opinion do you then entertain of me?" replied Blanch, in a more resolute tone. "Do you imagine me capable of permitting you now to continue your addresses? No, my Lord, these hopes are vain. If I was not born to be a queen; neither, on the other hand, did Heaven make

me of a temper to give ear to an unlawful passion. My husband is, as you are, of the noble family of Anjou : and though my duty to him were no obstacle to your love, my honour would oblige me to reject it. I beg you would retire. I must see you no more.”

“ What barbarity is this ?” cried the King : “ Ah, Blanch, is it possible you should use me with so much rigour ? Did you think the seeing you in the Constable’s arms too little to destroy me, that you forbid me your sight, the only comfort I have left ?” “ Fly, rather,” answered Siffredi’s daughter, shedding some tears. “ The sight of a thing we have tenderly loved, is no longer a happiness, when it is impossible we should possess it. Farewell, my Lord, avoid me as much as you are able. That violence, at least, is due to your own honour, and my reputation. I implore it too, for the sake of my repose : for though my virtue is not at all alarmed at the resistance of my heart, yet the memory of your love raises such violent conflicts in me, that they are too great to be endured.”

These words she pronounced with so much emotion, that she threw down a taper which stood behind her upon a table. The fall put it out. Blanch took it up, and opened the door of the antechamber to go to Nisa, who was not yet abed, to get it lighted ; and, having done it, she returned with the light. She was no sooner returned, than the King, who waited for her, began anew to press her to hearken to his addresses. At hearing the King’s voice,

voice, the Constable entered suddenly into the chamber, almost at the back of his wife, with his sword in his hand, and advancing towards Henriquez with all the fury that resentment could inspire: "This is too much to be borne, thou tyrant," (cried he); "think not I am so base, as to endure with patience, the affront you have given my honour." "Ah, traitor," replied the King, defending himself, "neither do you imagine you shall execute your design with impunity." At these words they began a fight, which was too hot to last long. The Constable fearing lest Sifredi and his servant should run in at Blanch's cries, and oppose his vengeance, took no care of guarding himself. His rage deprived him of all his judgment. He fought so like a madman, that he run himself upon his enemy's sword. It went quite through his body, up to the hilt. He fell, and the King immediately stayed his hand.

Leontio's daughter was very much grieved to see her husband in that condition. She surmounted the natural indifference she had for him, and threw herself down by him to give him assistance. But the unfortunate husband was too much prejudiced against her, to be at all moved by the testimonies she gave him of her sorrow, and her compassion. Death itself, which he found approaching, was not able to calm the transports of his jealousy. He thought of nothing, in his last moments, but his rival's happiness; and this idea was so tormenting to him, that
calling

calling together all the strength he had left, he lifted up his sword, which he still had in his hand, and buried it in Blanch's bosom: "Die," said he, stabbing her; "die, thou perfidious woman, since not even the bonds of marriage could secure me a faith which you had promised me at the altar. And thou, Henriquez," continued he, "shalt not now exult in thy destiny. Thou canst not enjoy the fruits of my destruction. I die contented." Having spoke thus, he expired; and his countenance, though all overspread with the shadows of death, had still in it something haughty and fierce. That of Blanch exhibited a quite different object. The wound she had received was mortal. She dropt down upon the dying corpse of her husband, and the blood of this innocent victim ran in one and the same stream with that of her murderer, who had so suddenly executed his cruel resolution, that the King was not able to prevent him.

The unfortunate prince gave a loud cry, when he saw Blanch fall to the ground; and being more sensible of the pain she felt, than she herself, was for giving her succour; but in a dying voice she said to him: "My Lord, you give yourself unnecessary trouble. I am the victim which unrelenting fate was all this while procuring. May this appease its wrath, and make the rest of your reign peaceful and happy." As she was saying these words, Leontio, drawn by the cries she gave, when her husband and the King were fighting, came

came into the room; and, struck with the objects he beheld, stood motionless. Blanch, without perceiving him, continued speaking to the King. "Adieu, my Prince," said she: "preserve my memory with kindness: my tenderness and misfortunes deserve it. Do not shew your resentment against my father. Have pity on his age and affliction, and forgive his zeal. But particularly, let him know my innocence: this is what I beseech you to perform, above all things. Adieu, my dear Henriquez,—I die—receive my last breath."

This said, she expired. The King continued for some time in a thoughtful silence. At last he said to Siffredi, who appeared to be in the deepest affliction: "Leontio, behold your work. This tragical event is the fruit of your officious care and zeal for me." The old man was so overwhelmed with grief, that he made no reply. But why should I endeavour to describe things which no words can express? I shall only add, that when their sorrow permitted them to break out into exclamations of despair, they made such complaints as would have pierced a heart of brass.

The King, as long as he lived, preserved a tender remembrance of his mistress. He could not be prevailed upon to marry Constantia. The Infant Don Pedro joined with that Princess, and they conjointly endeavoured, by all the means that could be thought of, to force the execution of Roger's will; but they were, at length, obliged to yield to the superiour power

power of Henriquez, who quelled all his enemies. As for Siffredi, his disturbance, upon having been sole cause of so many mischiefs, gave him an aversion to the world, and made his own country odious to him. He left Sicily, and sailing into Spain, with Porcia, his other daughter, purchased this castle. He lived here very near fifteen years after Alanch's death, and had the consolation, before he died, to see Porcia married. She married Don Jerome de Silva, and I am the only fruit of that bed. This, continued Don Pedro's widow, is the history of my family, and the faithful relation of the misfortunes described in that picture, which my grandfather Leontio caused to be painted, that he might leave to his posterity a monument of the fatal adventure.

CHAP. V.

Of Aurora's management when she came to Salamanca.

Don Ortiz, her companions, and myself, when we had heard this relation, went out of the hall, and left Aurora and Elvira by themselves. They spent the rest of the day in discourse together. They thought they could never have enough of each other's company; and next day, when we set forward upon our journey, they parted with as much concern, as two friends that have contracted an habitual intimacy.

At length we reached Salamanca, without meeting

meeting with any other accident in our way. There we immediately hired a house ready furnished, and Dame Ortiz, as we had before agreed, took upon her the name of *Donna Chimena de Guzman*. She had been a duenna too long not to be a good actress. One morning we went out with Aurora, a chambermaid, and a valet, and came to a house where we were informed Pacheco commonly lodged. She asked if they had any rooms to let: they answered, "Yes," and shewed her a very neat one, which she hired. She gave the landlady earnest, telling her it was for a nephew of hers, who was coming from Toledo to study at Salamanca, and that she expected him that very day.

The duenna and my mistress, after having made sure of this lodging, returned to their other house, and the beautiful Aurora, without losing any time, transformed herself into a cavalier. She covered her own black hair with a false head of white hair; painted her eye-brows of the same colour, and adjusted herself in such a manner, that she might very well pass for a young gentleman. Her mien was free and easy; and, but that her face was a little too handsome for a man, nothing could possibly betray her disguise. The maid who was to wait upon her in quality of a page disguised herself too, and we did not at all suspect she would play her part amiss: for besides that she was not over handsome, she had a pert (not to say impudent) air, which agreed perfectly well with the character she was to perform.

perform. In the afternoon these two actresses, being confident they could safely now appear upon the stage, that is, in their new lodging, set out thither in the company of my worship. We all three went in a coach, and carried with us all the things we reckoned we should stand in need of.

The landlady, whose name was *Bernarda Ramirez*, received us with abundance of civility, and led us to our apartment, where we began to talk with her. We agreed with her for our board by the month. We afterwards asked her if she had many lodgers besides us. "I have none at present," replied she: "but I need not want for them, if I were willing to take in all sorts of people: for my part, I care for none but young noblemen. This very evening, I expect one that comes hither from Madrid, to finish his studies. It is Don Lewis Pacheco: perhaps you may have heard of him." "No," replied Aurora, "I have no manner of knowledge of him; and I should take it kindly if you would give me some account of him, since we are to lodge in the same house." "Sir," replied the landlady, looking stedfastly upon our pretended cavalier, "he is a very fine gentleman, I assure you; I think he is something like yourself. Ah! you will be rare company for one another! By St Jago, I may now boast that I have the two prettiest gentlemen in my house, of any in all Spain." "This Don Lewis then," replied my mistress, "is, without doubt, a mighty happy man among the ladies here?"

here?" "Ay, that he is," answered the old woman; "he is a gallant every inch of him. He need but shew himself, and conquests drop in upon him thick and threefold. Among the rest, he has charmed a lady here, who has both youth and beauty. Her name is *Isabella*. She is the daughter of an old musty doctor in law. She is almost mad for him." "Pray, mother," interrupted Aurora earnestly, "is he on his side as fond of her?" "He loved her very passionately," answered Bernarda Ramirez, "before his departure for Madrid: but I don't know whether he still continues in the same mind; for he is a little apt to waver. He runs from one woman to another, as your young noblemen generally do."

The good widow had hardly done speaking when we heard a noise in the court. We presently looked out of the window, and saw two men lighting from their horses. It was Don Lewis Pacheco, who was just arrived from Madrid, with a valet de chambre. The old woman left us to go to receive him; and my mistress prepared herself, not without some timorousness, to act the part of Don Felix. Don Lewis, soon afterwards, came into our apartment booted and spurred as he was. "I am informed," says he, saluting Aurora, "that there is a young nobleman of Toledo lodged here. He will give me leave to express my joy, in being under the same roof with him. While my mistress made a return to the compliment, Pacheco seemed surprised to

so lovely a cavalier. He could not help telling her he had never seen so handsome a gentleman. After a great many other compliments, Don Lewis retired into his apartment.

While he was there pulling off his boots, and changing his cloaths and linen, a sort of page, who wanted to deliver him a letter, happened to meet Aurora upon the staircase. He took her for Don Lewis, and giving her his billet: "There, Signior Cavalier," said he; "though I never saw Don Pacheco, I do not think I need ask you if you are he. I dare say I am not mistaken." "No, no," replied my mistress, with an admirable presence of mind; "you are very right: you acquit yourself of your commission to a miracle. I will take care to send my answer." With this the page disappeared, and Aurora shutting herself up with her maid and myself, opened the letter, and read these words: "I was just now told that you are at Salamanca. With how much pleasure did I hear this agreeable news! I thought I should have lost my visits with joy. But do you still love Isabella? Come quickly, and assure her personally that you are still the same you was when you parted from her. I am afraid she will die withapture, if she finds you constant."

"A very passionate billet," says Aurora; "it shews a heart that is deeply in love, upon every word. This lady is a rival not to be despised. I must leave no stone unturned to shake off Don Lewis's affection from her, and hinder him from visiting her any more.

The undertaking, I own, is somewhat difficult: but I do not despair of accomplishing my design." With this my mistress began to study; and a moment afterwards she added: "If they are not divided in less than four and twenty hours, I will forfeit my head." In effect, Pacheco, having taken a little repose in his own apartment, came to ours, and fell again into conversation with Aurora before supper. "Signior Cavalier," says he, in a jesting way, "I believe the husbands and lovers will have no cause to rejoice at your coming to Salamanca: you look as if you would give them some disturbance. For my part, I tremble for fear of losing all my conquests." "Your fear," answered my mistress, in the same rallying tone, "is not very ill grounded. Don Felix de Mendoza is somewhat formidable, I can tell you that. Besides, I have a little knowledge of the ground here. The women are not over cruel. It is about a month since I rode through this town. I staid here eight days; and, under the rose be it spoken, inflamed the daughter of an old doctor in law."

I perceived that Don Lewis was a little uneasy at these words: "Might one ask the lady's name," says he, "without being too presuming?" "What do you talk of presuming?" answered the pretended Don Felix; "why should I make a secret of such an affair? Do you think I am more reserved than other gentlemen of my age? Do not have so unjust a thought of me. Besides, between

between ourselves, the woman does not deserve so much regard. It is only a poor cit. A man of quality is never seriously in love with such creatures; he thinks he does them honour enough, in condescending to dishonour them. Be informed, then, without any further ceremony, that the doctor's daughter is called *Isabella*." "And the doctor's name," interrupted Pacheco, impatiently, "is *Murcia de Lianna*, is it not?" "The same," replied my mistress. "Here is a letter she just now sent me. Read it, and then you will see whether my princess is fond of me or no." Don Lewis cast his eyes upon the billet, and knowing the hand, was in the utmost confusion and disturbance. "What do I see?" continued Aurora in a surprise: "you change colour: I am afraid you have some interest in the lady! If so, I am very sorry I have spoken with so much freedom."

"I am rather obliged to you for it," replied Don Lewis, with indignation and resentment: "Base woman! Don Felix; I am eternally indebted to you. You have delivered me from an error, in which I might still have remained a great while. I imagined that I was beloved, nay, adored by *Isabella*. I had some esteem for that wretch; but I find she is a mere coquette, and deserves nothing but contempt." "I cannot help approving your resentment," answers Aurora, testifying in her turn a sort of indignation. "Sure a creature of her mean birth might have been contented with one nobleman at a time, e-

pecially one so agreeable as you are ! Her inconstancy will admit of no excuse ; and I am so far from being pleased with her sacrificing your love to mine, that, to punish her, I am resolved to condemn her favours." "For my part," answered Pacheco, "I will never see her again. That is all the revenge I mean to take." "You are very much in the right," cried the false Mendoza. "Yet to shew her how little we both care for her, if you would take my advice, we would each of us write her an insulting letter. I will seal them up both together, and send them as an answer to her billet. But before we proceed to these extremities, do you consult your own heart ; perhaps you may ere long repent having broken with Isabella." "No, no," interrupted Don Lewis. "I shall never be so weak ; I will do what you propose, in order to mortify the ungrateful woman."

Upon this I went for ink and paper, and they sat down to write each of them an obliging letter to the daughter of Dr Murcia de la Lianna. Pacheco could not think of words home enough to express his mind, and he tore five or six letters that he had begun, because they seemed to him to be too civil. However, at last he finished one, with which he was well enough satisfied, as he had very good reason to be. It ran thus : "I would have you learn, my princess, to know yourself better ; and not to be so vain as to fancy I love you. It must be another guess-sort of merit than yours, to engage my affections.

Your

Your charms are not powerful enough to amuse a gentleman for a moment. The veriest scab of a scholar in the whole university, is e'en too good a morsel for such an one as you." This was the gracious billet-doux he resolved to send: and Aurora, having finished hers, which was of the same strain, sealed them both up, put them in a case, and giving it to me: "Gil Blas," says she, "be sure you deliver this packet to Isabella this very evening; you understand me," adds she, tipping me a wink which I knew very well how to construe. "Yes, Sir," replied I, "you shall be obeyed to your satisfaction, I will warrant you."

I went about my business that very moment, and being got into the street: "So, Signior Gil Blas," says I to myself, "you act the valet in this comedy, do you? Well then, friend; give a proof that you have wit enough to perform so considerable a part with applause. Signior Don Felix thought it was enough to tip you the wink. You see he depends upon your contrivance for the rest. Is he in the wrong in so doing? No, I guess is meaning. He would have me deliver only Don Lewis's billet. That is the interpretation of the wink he gave me. Nothing can be more plain." I immediately therefore unsealed the packet. I took out Pacheco's letter, and carried it to the daughter of Dr Murcia whose house I soon found out. At the door I met the little page, who was sent to our lodging. "Brother," says I to him, "are

“are not you a sort of an attendant upon Doctor Murcia’s daughter?” “Yes,” replies he. “You have so officious a physiognomy,” answers I, “that I make bold to desire you to give this billet-doux to your mistress.”

The page asked me who it came from, and I had no sooner told him from Don Lewis Pacheco, than he bid me follow him, for he had orders to bring me to Isabella herself. I followed him into a little chamber, in which was the lady. I was surpris’d at her beauty. I never saw more regular features. She had a smiling childish way with her; but for all that, I will engage she had walked without leading-strings for thirty good years at least. “Friend,” said she, with an obliging countenance, “do you belong to Don Lewis Pacheco?” I answered, that I had been his valet de chambre for about three weeks. And then I delivered her the fatal epistle. She read it over two or three times. She could hardly believe what she saw. And, indeed, she could never have expected such an answer. She lifted up her eyes to heaven, bit her lips, and shewed in her face the uneasiness she felt in her heart. Afterwards, addressing herself to me: “Friend,” says she, “is Don Lewis run mad? Tell me, if you are able, why he writes to me in so genteel a manner. What demon is he possessed with? If he has a mind to break with me, could not he do it without affronting me so grossly?” “Madam,” says I, “my master is certainly in the wrong: but he was in a manner forced to do what he did. If you will give me your prom-
mise

I promise that you will be secret, I will tell you the whole mystery." I promise you to be as secret as you can desire," replied she hastily, "I will never betray you: speak boldly." "Well then," answered I, "the case, in two words, is this. A moment after he had received your letter, there entered our lodgings a woman covered with a veil to her very feet. She asked for Signior Pacheco, talked to him in private for some time, and at last I heard her say to him; "You swear you will never see her again; but that will not satisfy me: let me see you write her a letter this moment, as I shall dictate it; this I expect you will do." Don Lewis did as she desired, and giving me the letter, "Inquire out the house of Dr Murcia de la Lianna," says he, "and contrive to get this note into the hands of his daughter Isabella." "You see, Madam," continued I, "this disobliging letter is the work of a rival, and consequently my master is not so guilty." "O Heavens," cried she, "this is still worse than the other. His infidelity offends me more than the shocking words he writes to me: Ah faithless!" — But, immediately adds she, with a more haughty air, "let him follow his new mistress without constraint, I don't intend to disturb him in the least. Tell him I should have left my rival a clear stage, without his insulting me in this manner, and that I despise so wavering a lover too much to endeavour to keep him mine." With these words she sent me away, and retired very much enraged against Don Lewis.

I,

I, for my part, departed hugely well satisfied with what I had done, and I fancied that I might come to be a very able trickster, if I would but apply my talents that way. I returned to our lodgings, where I found Mendoza and Pacheco at supper together, conversing with as much freedom and familiarity as if they had been long acquainted. Aurora saw by my looks that I had acquitted myself of my commission with success. "Well, Gil Blas," says she; "give us an account of your errand." Here again my wit was to be pumped for a proper answer. I said I had delivered the packet with my own hand, and that Isabella having read the two billet-doux contained in it, instead of seeming at all disturbed, fell into such a fit of laughter, that I took her for a mad woman, and that when her mirth was a little abated, she cried out: "On my word, the young gentlemen have a very pretty style. I have hardly known any body write half so agreeably as these cavaliers." "She carries it off then triumphantly," cried my mistress: "this is a coquette with a vengeance!" "For my part," says Don Lewis, "I am amazed at Isabella's acting in this manner. She is certainly very much altered, during my absence, from what she was." "I own," replied Aurora, "I could never have believed this of her, no more than you. But there are some women that know how to assume all manner of shapes. I myself have formerly been in love with one of those creatures, and she made a cully

cully of me for a long while. Gil Blas can tell you what a demure air she had." "It is very true," says I, putting in my oar, "she had a look would have cozened the wisest man in the world. I myself should have been caught with it."

Pacheco, and the false Mendoza, laughed heartily at hearing me talk thus; the one laughed at the testimony I bore against an imaginary damsel, and the other at the terms I made use of. The discourse continued to turn upon those women that know how to disguise both their thoughts and looks; and the result of our conference was, that Isabella was plainly convicted of being a jilt. Don Lewis renewed his protestations of never seeing her again; and Don Felix, after his example, swore he would always hold her in the utmost contempt. In consequence of these protestations, they contracted a friendship together, and made a mutual promise of keeping nothing secret from each other. After a great many other compliments, which passed after supper, each retired to his apartment to take repose. I followed Aurora into hers, and gave her an exact account of the discourse I had with Isabella. I did not omit the least circumstance. I thought my mistress would have kissed me for joy: "Dear Gil Blas," says she, "I am charmed with thy wit. When one is unfortunately engaged in a passion that obliges us to have recourse to stratagems and artifices, what an advantage is it to have so exact an assistant as thou art?"

Cheer

Cheer up, lad. We have defeated one rival that might have given us some trouble. So far, so good. But as we lovers are liable to strange turns of fortune, I am for making short work on it, and bringing Aurora and Guzman upon the stage immediately to-morrow. I approved of her resolution, and leaving Signior Don Felix with his page, retired into a little closet, where my bed stood.

C H A P. VI.

What stratagems Aurora used to win the love of Don Lewis Pacheco.

THE two new friends got together again next morning. They began the day with embraces, which Aurora was obliged to give and receive, in order to play the part of Don Felix the more naturally. They went out to walk about the town, and I attended upon them together with Chilindron, Don Lewis's valet. We stopt near the university to look upon some titles of books which were stuck upon the gate. Several others were musing themselves with reading them, and among the rest, I spied a little man that was giving his opinion on the several books that were advertised. The people listened to him with a great deal of attention, and he seemed to think he richly deserved it. He looked to me extremely vain, and was very positive, as you see little men generally are. "That new translation of Horace," says he, "which is advertised there in such large letters, is a poor prose piece of business, written by an old

lege-pedant. The book, indeed, is mightily esteemed among the scholars, who have already bought up four editions of it : but there is not one man of sense that will so much as look into it." He gave no better a character of the other books. He damned them all, without mercy or charity. I fancy it was some author. I could have been contented to hear him a little longer ; but I was obliged to wait upon Don Lewis and Don Felix, who having no more gust to his prate, than interest in the books he criticised, e'en marched off from him and the university too.

We returned to our lodging about dinner-time. My mistress sat down to table with Pacheco, and cunningly turned the conversation upon her own family. " My father," says she, " is a younger brother of the family of Mendoza, which is settled at Toledo ; and my mother is sister to Donna Chimena de Guzman, who is lately come to Salamanca about an important affair, with her niece Aurora, the only daughter of Don Vincent de Guzman, whom perhaps you may know." " No," replied Don Lewis, " but I have often heard speak of him, as also of your cousin Aurora. May I believe what is said of her ? It is reported that nothing can equal her wit and beauty." " As for wit," answered Don Felix, " it is true she does not want for it. Her education too has given it no small addition. But she is not so very handsome. They say we two are very like one another." " If so," cried Pacheco, " she does not comè short of her

character. Your features are very regular: your cousin therefore must needs be charming. I wish I could see and talk with her a little." "I will satisfy that curiosity," replied the false Mendoza, and this very day too. I will carry you to my aunt's some time this afternoon."

After this my mistress turned the discourse another way, and talked of indifferent matters. In the afternoon, while they were preparing themselves to pay a visit to Donna Chimena, I slipped out before, and ran to bid the duenna make ready to receive them. I then returned to wait upon Don Felix, who carried Don Lewis to his aunt's house. They were scarce entered there, when they met Madam Chimena, who beckoned to them not to make a noise. "Softly, softly," says she, in a low voice, "you will wake my niece. Ever since yesterday she has had a terrible fit of the head-ach, which has but just now quitted her, and so the poor girl is laid down a little." "I am very sorry for this disappointment," said Mendoza. "I was in hopes we should have seen my cousin. I brought my friend Pacheco along with me purely for that purpose." There is no such mighty haste," replied Ortiz smiling; "you may as well put it off till to-morrow." The two cavaliers having had a little farther talk with the old woman, took their leave and retired.

Don Lewis carried us to see a young gentleman of his acquaintance, called *Don Gabriel de Pedros*. There we passed the rest of the day.

day ; we supped there too, and did not get away till two o'clock in the morning. We were about half way home, when we found two men stretched out at their full lengths upon the ground. We supposed they were some unfortunate wretches murdered by villains, and therefore we stopped to give them assistance, if it was not too late. As we were feeling if they had any life remaining in them, the watch came. At first they took us for the murderers, and surrounded us ; but they had a better opinion of us when they had heard us speak, and, with the help of their dark lanterns, discovered the features of Mendoza and Pacheco. Afterwards they examined the faces of the two men they imagined we had killed, and found them to be an unwieldy rogue of a licentiate, with his footman, both overtaken with wine, or, to speak plain English, dead drunk. " Gentlemen," cried one of the watch, " I know this great fat fellow. It is the licentiate Guyomar, rector of our university. For all he looks thus, I can tell you he is one of the greatest scholars at Salamanca. There is never a philosopher of them all, but what he lays as flat as a flounder in a dispute. His tongue is never tired. It is a pity he is a little too much given to wine, women, and law-suits. He is just now come from his Isabella, and, by ill fortune, his guide is got as drunk as himself. They are both tumbled into the kennel. But this often happened to him before the good man was rector. Honour, you see, does not al-

ways change mens manners." We left the two fots in the hands of the watch, who took care to carry them home. We went straight to our lodgings, and thought of nothing but taking our repose.

About noon Don Felix and Don Lewis arose, and Aurora de Guzman was the first thing they talked of. "Gil Blas," says my mistress to me, "go to my aunt Donna Chimena, and ask her if Signior Pacheco and I can see my cousin to-day." I went out about my errand, or rather to consult with the duenna what we should do. When we had concerted measures together, I returned to the false Mendoza: "Sir," says I, "your cousin Aurora is quite recovered of her illness. She herself ordered me to tell you that your visit will be very agreeable; and Donna Chimena bid me assure Signior Pacheco, that for your sake he should always be extremely welcome to her house."

I perceived that Don Lewis was very much pleased with these last words. My mistress observed the same, and took it as a happy omen. Just before dinner, Chimena's footman appeared, and said to Don Felix: "Sir, a man from Toledo came to ask for you at my Lady your aunt's, and left this note for you." The false Mendoza opened it, and read these words: "If you are willing to hear news from your father, and other important matters, repair to the Black-horse near the university, immediately upon the receipt of this note." "I am so impatient to hear this news,"

news," says he, "that I am resolved to be gone this moment. Signior Pacheco," continued he, "if I am not back in two hours, you may go to my aunt's by yourself. I will be with you there in the afternoon. The message Gil Blas brought you from Donna Chimena, gives you a very good pretence to visit there." Saying these words he went out, and ordered me to follow him.

You may easily imagine, that, instead of going to the Black-horse, we went directly to Ortiz's house. The moment we were got thither, Aurora pulled off her fair hair, washed her eye-brows, put on a woman's habit, and became a handsome brown lady, as she naturally was. Her disguise altered her to such a degree, that nobody would ever have taken Aurora and Don Felix for the same person. Besides, she seemed taller in a woman's dress, than in a man's. Her high-heel shoes contributed very much to make her so. When she had added to her charms all the assistance that art could lend them, she waited for Don Lewis, in an emotion mixed with fear and hope. Sometimes she thought she might confide in her wit and beauty; and at others, she trembled for fear she should prove unsuccessful in this her first attempt. Ortiz, on her side, prepared to do her best to back my mistress. For my part, as I was not to be seen by Pacheco in that house, and, like those actors who do not come upon the stage till the latter end of the play, was to appear only at

the end of the visit, I went my way as soon as ever I had dined.

At length every thing being in a readiness, in comes Don Lewis. He was received with great complaisance by Donna Chimena, and had two or three hours talk with Aurora; at the end of which I entered the chamber where they sat, and addressing myself to the cavalier: "Signior," says I, "my master Don Felix can't wait upon you here to-day. He begs you to excuse him. He is with three Tolédans, from whom he cannot possibly get away." "Ah, the debauchee!" cried Donna Chimena; "he is fuddling, I dare lay my life." "No, Madam," replied I, "they are talking about very serious affairs. He is extremely sorry that he cannot come hither as he promised. He charged me to tell this, both to you and to Donna Aurora." "Indeed," says my mistress, "I shall not accept of this excuse; he knows I have been ill: he ought to be more tender of his relations than this comes to. But, to punish him, he shall not see me again this fortnight." "Oh, Madam," cried Don Lewis, "do not form so cruel a resolution: Don Felix has punishment enough already in losing the pleasure of your conversation this once."

They continued to talk in this manner upon the same subject, for some time. Afterwards Pacheco retired. The charming Aurora immediately changed her dress, and reassumed her cavalier's habit. She returns to our lodging as soon as possible: "I beg your
pardon,

pardon, my dear friend," said she to Don Lewis, "for not coming to you at my aunt's; I did not know how to get rid of the company I was in. But, however, you have had the satisfaction to gratify your curiosity. What do you think of my cousin?" "She has bewitched me," replied Pacheco. "You spoke truth when you said she was like you. I never saw features more resembling: the very same turn of the face, the same eyes, the same mouth, the same voice. Yet there is some little difference: Aurora is taller than you: she is brown, and you are fair: you are gay; she is serious. This is all there is to distinguish you one from the other. As for wit," continued he, "I do not believe a celestial substance itself can have more than your cousin. In a word, she is the most complete woman that ever my eyes beheld."

Signior Pacheco pronounced these last words in so serious a tone, that Don Felix said to him smiling, "Friend, go no more to Donna Chimena's: I give you this advice for your repose. Aurora de Guzman might inspire you with a passion" — "I need not see her again," interrupted he, "to be in love with her. That work is done already." "I am very sorry to hear that," replied the pretended Mendoza, "for you are not a man that will settle, and my cousin is no Isabella. I can tell you, Aurora would hardly receive a lover, whose views were not honourable." "Honourable!" replied Don Lewis: "can any body think of any other, to a lady of her birth?"

birth? Alas, I should look upon myself as the happiest of mankind, if she approved of my addresses so far, as to tie her destiny to mine."

"If you are thereabouts," replied Don Felix, "I offer you my assistance. I will do you all the good offices with Aurora that I am able: and I will engage to bring over my aunt to your interests even by to-morrow, and she has a very great influence upon my cousin." Pacheco returned a thousand thanks to a cavalier, who fed him with such pleasing hopes, and we perceived with joy, that our plot took as we could wish. The next day, we increased Don Lewis's passion by a new invention. My mistress, after having been to wait upon Donna Chimena, under pretence of proposing him to her, returned to their lodging; "I have talked with my aunt," says she, "and had no small trouble to make her your friend. She was violently prejudiced against you. I cannot imagine who could have given her such an ill character of you: but I took your part boldly, and have at length wiped away the ill impressions she had received of your manners."

"But this is not all," continued Aurora, "I have a mind you should have some conversation with my aunt in my presence; for by that means we may secure her to our interests." Pacheco seemed very impatient to talk with Donna Chimena, and that satisfaction was granted him next morning. The false Mendoza carried him to Dame Ortiz

and

and they three had a conversation together, wherein Don Lewis shewed that he had suffered himself to be very much inflamed in a short time. The crafty Chimena pretended to be moved at his tenderness, and promised to do all she could to persuade her niece to accept of him for a husband. Pacheco threw himself at the feet of so kind an aunt, and thanked her for all her favours. Upon this, Don Felix asked if his cousin was up. "No," replied the duenna; "you cannot see her now; but come again in the afternoon, and you shall talk with her as long as you please." This answer of Chimena, as you may easily imagine, gave very great joy to Don Lewis, who thought that morning very tedious. He went back to his lodgings with Mendoza, who took no small pleasure in observing him, and finding in him all the appearances of a real lover.

They talked of nothing but Aurora; and when they had dined, Don Felix said to Pacheco; "I have a sudden thought come into my head. I have a mind to go to my aunt's a little while before you. I will talk with my cousin in private, and try to discover how her heart is disposed towards you." Don Lewis liked the design. He let his friend go first, and did not set out till an hour after him. My mistress made such good use of this time, that she was quite dressed in her woman's cloaths, when her lover came in. "I thought," said that cavalier, after having saluted Aurora and the duenna, "I should have met Don Felix

Felix here." "You will see him presently," replied Donna Chimena, "he is now writing in my closet." Pacheco seemed satisfied with this excuse, and fell into conversation with the two ladies. Yet, notwithstanding the presence of his mistress, he found the hours run away, and no Mendoza appeared. He shewed some surprise at this disappointment: upon which Aurora, suddenly changing her countenance, said laughing to Don Lewis: "Is it possible that you should never in the least suspect the trick we have put upon you? Can a false head of hair, and whitened eyebrows, make me so different from myself, as to deceive any body so far as this? Be at length disabused, Pacheco," continued she, resuming a serious tone; "know that Don Felix de Mendoza and Aurora de Guzman are one and the same person."

She was not contented with having informed him of his error: she confessed the weakness she had for him, and all the steps she had taken to bring things to the condition they were now in. Don Lewis was no less charmed than surprised at what he heard; he threw himself at my mistress's feet, and said to her passionately; "Ah, beautiful Aurora, may I indeed believe that I am the happy mortal for whom you have so much goodness? What can I do to shew my acknowledgment? An eternal love is not enough to repay it." These words were followed by a thousand other tender sayings; after which the lovers concerted the measures they should take to accomplish
their

their desires. It was resolved that we should instantly set out for Madrid, where we should put a catastrophe to our play by a wedding. This design was almost as soon executed as conceived. Don Lewis, about a fortnight afterwards, married my mistress, and their nuptials were celebrated with inexpressible magnificence and joy.

CHAP. VII.

Gil Blas quits Aurora's service, and goes into that of Don Gonzales Pacheco.

THREE weeks after this marriage, my mistress was pleased to reward the services I had done her. She made me a present of an hundred pistoles, and said to me: "My good friend Gil Blas, I do not turn you away; you may stay with me as long as you think fit; but Don Gonzales Pacheco, an uncle of my husband's, desires to have you for his valet de chambre. I have given him so good a character of you, that he begged me to make over to him the right I had in you. He is an old gentleman," added she, "of a very easy temper, and I believe you will live very happy in his service."

I thanked Aurora for her kindness to me; and since she had no further need of me, I accepted of the place which she offered; and I did it the more willingly, because I should not go out of the family. One morning, therefore, I went from the new-married bride to wait upon Signior Don Gonzales.

I found him abed, though it was almost noon. When I entered his chamber, he was eating some soup, which a page had just brought him in. The old man's mustachios were papered up to keep them in curl; his eyes looked like an extinguished candle; and his face was as lean and pale as a ghost. He was one of those old battered beaux, who, having been very loose in their younger days, do still retain some of their former folly. He received me very graciously, and told me, that if I would serve him with as much zeal as I had served his niece, he would make my life very easy. I promised to do so, and from that moment he made me his valet de chambre.

And now I have a new master, but sure such a one as never was seen before. When he got up, I thought I beheld the resurrection of Lazarus. His body was so macerated, that, by only seeing him naked, one might easily have learned anatomy. He had such spindle shanks, that they looked but very thin, even after he had pulled on three or four pair of stockings one over another. Besides, this living mummy was very ptificky, and coughed at every word that came out of his mouth. When he was up, he drank some chocolate. Afterwards he called for paper and ink, wrote a billet, which he sealed, and sent away by the page who had given him his soup; and then turning to me: "Friend," says he, "I intend for the future to send you of my errands, especially of those to Donna Euphrasia, who is

a young lady that I love, and who loves me tenderly."

"Good Lord!" says I to myself, "why should we wonder that the young men should fancy themselves adored, when this old dotard believes himself beloved?" "Gil Blas," continues he, "you shall go with me to see her: I sup there almost every night; you will be charmed with her modest, discreet carriage. Far from being like those giddy jilflirts, who are all for youth, and are won wholly by appearances, she is sage and judicious; she values a man for nothing but his sense; and prefers a lover that knows how to love indeed, before all the beaux and fops in the world."

Don Gonzales did not end his mistress's eulogium here; he described her as a compendium of all perfections; but he had an auditor that was not so easy of belief upon this subject. After the tricks which I knew the actresses practised, I could not think that any old gentleman was ever happy in his amours. However, out of complaisance to my master, I pretended to give credit to all he said. I did more; I cried up Euphrasia's good taste. I was even so impudent as to aver that she could not have fixed her choice upon a more amiable gallant. The good man did not perceive how I cajolled him: on the contrary, my words made him vainer than ever; so true it is, that flattery, though never so gross, will go down with the great.

The old man, after he had writ his letter, pulled some hairs out of his beard with a little

pair of pincers: then he washed his eyes to clear away a thick gum of which they were full. He also washed his ears, afterwards his hands; and having finished his ablutions, he blacked over his mustachios, his eye-brows, and his hair. He was longer at his toilet than an old woman that is labouring to conceal the havock which father Time has made on her. He had hardly done dishing himself out, when there entered an old gentleman of his acquaintance, who was called the *Count de Asumar*. This man freely shewed the grey-ness of his hair, leaned upon a stick, and seemed to do honour to his age, instead of trying to appear young. "Signior Pacheco," said he at his entrance, "I am come to take a dinner with you." "You are extremely welcome, Count," replied my master. At the same time they embraced each other, and being sat down fell to chat till dinner.

Their conversation at first turned upon a bull-feast, which there had been a few days before. They talked of the cavaliers who had distinguished themselves in it either by skill or strength; and upon this the old Count, like Nestor, who took occasion from every thing to praise the times past, said sighing: "Alas! I can now-a-days see no men comparable to those I have seen formerly, neither are tourneys held with so much magnificence as they were when I was a young fellow." I could not help laughing to myself, at the good man's prejudice against a thing he was past. I remember when the fruit was brought

in, and he saw among it some very fine peaches, he said: "In my memory, peaches used to be much bigger than they are at present. Nature grows weaker and weaker every day." "At that rate," answers Don Gonzales smiling, "the peaches of Adam's days must have been of a prodigious bigness."

The Count de Asumar staid almost till night with my master, who was no sooner rid of him than he himself went out, bidding me follow him. We went to Euphrasia's, who lodged about a hundred paces from our house, and we found her in an apartment which indeed was extremely neat. She was very well dressed, and had an air of youthfulness which made me take her for a mere girl, though she had full thirty good years over her head. She might really be called handsome, and I soon admired her wit. She was none of those flirting coquettes, whose talk is made up of nothing but noise, which they accompany with a loose forward air; there was abundance of modesty in her action as well as in her discourse, and she talked with a great deal of wit, without seeming to value herself too much upon it. "O heavens!" said I to myself, "is it possible, that one who seems so reserved should be a kept mistress?" For my part, I used to think that all your misses must certainly be impudent. I was surprised at seeing one so modest in appearance, without considering that those ladies know how to take any shape that is conformable to the humour of the cully that falls in their clutches. Do their

keepers love spirit and life? they are brisk and petulant: do they love reservedness? they adorn themselves with a shew of modesty. They are arrant chameleons, and change colour according to the humour and genius of the men that visit them.

Don Gonzales was not one of those gentlemen that love a high-spirited mistress. He could not endure a haughty beauty; a woman to catch him must have the look of a Vestal. This temper of his, Euphrasia governed herself by, and gave a proof that there are good actresses besides those that make acting their profession. I left my master with his nymph, and went down into a hall, where I found an old chambermaid, whom I knew again for one that had been a waiter to an actress. She on her side remembered me too. "Are you here, Signior Gil Blas," says she? "you have left Arsenia then, as I have Constantia?" "Left her!" replied I: "Ay, a great while ago. I have since served a woman of quality. The life of those actors does not at all hit my taste. I quitted Arsenia of my own accord, without condescending to have the least eclairsissement with her." "You did well," replied the chambermaid, whose name was *Beatrice*; "I left Constantia much after the same manner. One morning I gave her in my accounts with a great deal of coldness and indifference; she received them without saying one single syllable, and so we parted very genteelly."

"I am overjoyed," says I, "to find that we

we are both now got into creditable families. Donna Euphrasia seems to be a sort of a woman of quality; and is, I believe, of a very good character." "You are not in the least deceived," replied the old trot; "she comes of a very good family, and her humour is, I can tell you, extremely even and sweet. She is none of those passionate difficult mistresses, who find fault with every thing, are everlastingly scolding and tormenting their servants, and whose service is, in short, a hell upon earth. She has not yet given me one angry word. When I happen to do any thing not exactly to her mind, she reproves me without passion, and never gives any of those epithets of which some violent ladies are so over-liberal." "My master too," replied I, "is of a very quiet disposition; he is the best-tempered man in the world: you and I are in much better places than when we served the actresses." "Better a thousand times," answered Beatrice; "then I lived a life full of noise and tumult: whereas at present I live in a perfect retreat. Nothing of mankind comes hither besides Signior Don Gonzales. I shall see nobody but you in my solitude, and I am very glad of it. I have long had a kindness for you, and have more than once envied Laura the happiness of having you for her lover; but now I hope I shall be as fortunate as she was. If I have not her youth and beauty; to make amends, I hate coquetry; and for fidelity, I am a perfect turtle-dove."

As the kind-hearted Beatrice was one of

those females, who are obliged to offer their favours, because nobody thinks it worth while to beg them, I was not in the least tempted to catch at her advances. However, I was not willing she should perceive my contempt of her, and therefore I was so complaisant as to talk to her in such a manner as not to deprive her of all hopes of engaging me to love her. I imagined, I had made a conquest of this old waiting-maid ; but I was deceived again on this occasion. She did not care for me so much for any extraordinary beauty that was in me ; her design was to inspire me with love, in order to bring me into her mistress's interests, for which she was so zealous that she did not care what it cost her, so she could but serve them. I found my error the very next morning, when I carried a billet-doux from my master to Euphrasia. Her Ladyship gave me a mighty gracious reception ; said a thousand obliging things to me, and the maid joined in with the mistress in praising me. One admired my face, the other my wisdom and prudence. Believe them, and Signior Don Gonzales possessed a treasure in his valet de chambre ; in a word, they gave me such extravagant commendations, that I began to suspect there was something more in it than ordinary. I soon guessed the motive ; but I received all they said with the simplicity of an idiot, and by that means turned the jest upon themselves : at length they pulled off the mask, and shewed themselves in their true colours.

“ Take my advice, Gil Blas,” says Euphrasia,

sia, "and it shall be your own fault if you don't make your fortune. Let us all act in concert. Don Gonzales is old, and of so crazy a state of health, that the least fit of illness, with the assistance of a good doctor, will carry him off. Let us make good use of the few moments he has to live, and work him up to leave me the bulk of his estate. I will give you good part of it. I promise you to do it, and you may depend upon this promise, as firmly as if it were made in the presence of all the notaries in Madrid." "Madam," answered I, "dispose of your servant as you please; do but let me know what you would have me do, and I will engage to satisfy you." "Well then," replied she, "watch your master narrowly, and give me an account of every thing he does. Whenever you talk with him, be sure to turn the conversation upon women, and from thence take occasion artfully to commend me. Cry up Euphrasia to him as much as you are able. Then I would have you attentively mind every thing that passes in the family of the Pacheco's. If you find that any kinsman of Don Gonzales is very assiduous about him, and has an eye to his estate, let me know it immediately. I desire no more. I will soon do his business for him. I know the characters of all your master's relations, and how to make them ridiculous to him; and I have already put all his nephews and cousins quite out of his favour."

By these instructions, and others which
Euphrasia

Euphrasia added, I guessed that this lady was one of those who traded in old culleys. She had not long since prevailed upon Don Gonzales to sell an estate, the purchase-money whereof she swept into her own pocket. She every day got something valuable from him; and hoped, besides, that he would not forget her in his will. I pretended myself very willing to do any thing she desired of me; and not to lie for the matter, was in some doubt, as I went home, whether I should help to cozen my master, or try to undeceive him about his mistress. The latter seemed the honestest resolution, and I found myself more inclined to do my duty than betray it. Besides, Euphrasia had promised me nothing certain, and that perhaps was the reason my fidelity was not corrupted. I resolved therefore to serve Don Gonzales zealously, and was persuaded, that, if I could bring him off from his idol, I should be better rewarded for so good an action, than for the ill ones which it was in my power to do.

To compass this design, I feigned myself entirely devoted to Donna Euphrasia's service, I made her believe I was always talking of her to my master, and thereupon told her a thousand lies, which she greedily swallowed. I so well insinuated myself into her good opinion, that she thought me wholly in her interests. The better to impose upon her, I pretended love to Beatrice, who, overjoyed to have a young man in her chains at her age, never in the least suspected that I put upon her. When
my

my master and I were with our princesses, you might have seen two very different pictures, though both of the same kind. Don Gonzales, pale and shrivelled, as I have described him, when he cast sheep's eyes at his mistress, looked just like a man that was giving up the ghost: and my sweet creature, whenever I grew passionate, assumed a childish air, and run over all the grimaces of an old coquette: and indeed she was forty years old the least penny. She had improved mightily in the service of some of those heroines of gallantry, who knew how to please even in their old age, and who die, laden with the spoils of two or three generations. I was not contented with going to Euphrasia's every night with my master, I went sometimes in the day-time by myself. But go to her house at what hour I would, I could never see any thing of a man there, nor even a woman that looked suspiciously. I could not discover the least footsteps of infidelity in her: which surprised me not a little; for I could not believe that so handsome a woman was strictly constant to Don Gonzales. I was not deceived in my opinion; and the beautiful Euphrasia, as you shall soon be informed, that she might wait for my master's death with the more patience, had provided herself of a lover, whose age was more suitable to her own.

One morning I carried a note to her as usual. While I was in her chamber, I spied the feet of a man hidden behind the hangings. I went out again without letting her see that I had

had minded it: but though it was no more than I ought to have expected, and was besides no bread and butter of mine, I could not help being disturbed at it. "Ah, perfidious," said I to myself, "wicked Euphrasia! Not contented to impose upon a good old man, by pretending to love him, must you also entertain another, to complete your treachery!" What a fool was I to argue in this manner? I should have rather laughed at the adventure, and looked upon it as a compensation for the loathsomeness there was in the embraces of my master. At least, I had better have said nothing of the matter, than taken this opportunity to shew myself an honest servant. But instead of moderating my zeal, I entered warmly into Don Gonzales's interests, and made him a faithful relation of what I had seen. To this I added the temptations Euphrasia had offered, in order to seduce me. I concealed nothing from him that she had said to me; and it was entirely his own fault that he did not see thoroughly into his mistress's character. He was astonished with what he heard, and a little transport of anger made me fancy, that her Ladyship would not escape unpunished for her infidelity. "It is enough, Gil Blas," says he to me; "I am very sensible of the zeal with which you serve me, and I highly approve of it. I will go this moment to Euphrasia. I will not spare her in the least, but break with her for ever." At these words he went to her indeed, and gave me leave to stay behind, that I might avoid the scurvy figure

I must infallibly have made in the scene of their expostulation.

I waited for my master's return with the greatest impatience in the world. I did not doubt but he would now be entirely freed from the power of his nymph's attractions, having such just reason to be provoked with her. In this thought I rejoiced mightily at what I had done. I represented to myself the satisfaction it would be to the lawful heirs of Don Gonzales, when they should be informed that their kinsman was no longer a slave to a passion so contrary to their interests. I flattered myself how much they would be obliged to me for this service, and I fancied I should be distinguished far above all other valets, who are generally more willing to keep their masters in debauchery than to work them out of it. I was mighty fond of honour, and imagined with great pleasure that I should be reckoned the very Corypheus of servants. But all these agreeable ideas vanished away in smoke a few hours afterwards. My master returned. "My good Gil Blas," says he to me, "I have had a sharp conflict with Euphrasia. She avers that what you have told me is all false. If I would believe her, you are an impostor, and devoted entirely to my relations, for whose sake you are resolved to try all means to set me at variance with her. I saw her shed unfeigned tears. She swore to me by every thing sacred, that she never made you any proposal; and that she admits of no man's visits but my own. Beatrice, who seems

seems a very honest woman, protested the same thing to me; so that my anger is appeased do all I can."

"How, Sir," interrupted I, very much dejected, "do you doubt my sincerity? Do you distrust?"—"No, my good lad," interrupted he in his turn, "I must needs do you justice. I don't think you are in league with my nephews. I am persuaded you are concerned only for my interest, and am therefore very much obliged to you; but appearances are deceitful: perhaps you did not really see what you fancied you saw, and in that case consider how displeasing your accusations must be to a Euphrasia. Be it as it will, she is a woman I cannot possibly help loving. I must unavoidably make her the sacrifice she demands of me, and that sacrifice is parting with you. "I am very sorry for it, Gil Blas," continued he, "and I assure you I did not consent to do it without a great deal of regret: but I cannot tell how to help it. You need not, however, be very uneasy at it, for I don't mean to turn you off unrewarded. Besides, I will place you with a lady of my acquaintance, where you will live very agreeably."

I was very much mortified to see the tables turned upon me in this manner. I cursed Euphrasia, and pitied Don Gonzales's weakness. The good old gentleman was very sensible, that, in turning me away only to please his mistress, he performed no very manly action; and therefore to make amends for his folly,

folly, and sweeten the pill a little, he gave me fifty ducats, and carried me next day to the Marchioness of Chaves. He told that lady, in my presence, that I was a young fellow of very good qualities; that he loved me very much, and being obliged to part with me for some family-reasons, begged her to take me into her service. From that moment she received me into the number of her domestics; so that I presently saw a new house over my head.

C H A P. VIII.

The character of the Marchioness of Chaves, and the persons that commonly visited there.

THE Marchioness of Chaves was a widow about five and thirty years old, handsome, tall, and well-shaped. She had an estate of ten thousand ducats *per ann.* and had no children. I never saw a woman more serious, or that talked less. Yet she was accounted one of the wittiest ladies in all Madrid. The great concourse of persons of quality and men of letters, that flocked thither every day, contributed, perhaps more than her own conversation, to gain her that repute. However, I shall not presume to decide what it was. I shall only say, that her very name carried along with it the notion of a superiour genius, and that her house was called, by way of distinction, *the court of judicature for productions of wit.*

And indeed, there was either a play, or

some other poem, read there every day. But none besides serious pieces could get audience here. Comic writings were looked upon with contempt. The best comedy, or the most diverting romance, was thought but a very weak performance, not worthy of any praise; whereas the least work, if serious, an ode, an eclogue, a sonnet, was judged as the greatest effort of human wit. It often happened, that the public did not confirm the decrees of the court, and impolitely hissed the pieces which had been there cried up to the skies.

I was chamber-keeper in this house; I mean it was my business to prepare every thing in my mistress's apartment for the reception of the company, to set chairs for the men, and stools for the women: after which I stood at the door of the chamber to tell my mistress who inquired for her, and to introduce the visitants. The first day I was in my post, the governour of the pages, who by chance was then in the antechamber with me, agreeably gave me the character of every body that came. His name was *Andrew Molina*. He was naturally phlegmatic, a mighty rallier, and did not want for wit. A bishop was the first that made his entry. When he was gone in; "This prelate," says the governour, "is of a very odd character. He has some little interest at court; but he would fain have you believe he has a vast deal. He makes offers of service to all the world, and serves nobody. One day he met a gentleman at court, who saluted him: he stops him, loads him with compliments,

compliments, and shaking him by the hand :
 " I am, Sir," says he, " entirely devoted to
 you. I beg you would but try me. I shall
 not die contented if I have not some opportu-
 nity of obliging you." The gentleman thank-
 ed him in a very grateful manner ; and when
 his back was turned, the prelate said to one
 of his servants ; " I think I know that man, I
 have a confused idea of having seen him some-
 where before."

A moment after the bishop, the son of a
 grandee, appeared ; and when I had introdu-
 ced him into my mistress's chamber, " This
 gentleman," says Molina, " is another origi-
 nal. He often goes into a house in order to
 talk with the master of it about some impor-
 tant affair, and comes out again without re-
 membering to say a word concerning it. But,"
 added the governour, seeing two women come
 in, " here comes Donna Angela de Penna-
 fiel, and Donna Margarita de Montalvan.
 These two ladies are not at all like one ano-
 ther. Donna Margarita sets up for a philo-
 sopher. She will hold you a dispute with the
 learnedest doctor in Salamanca, and never re-
 ceede an inch from her argument, let him push
 her never so home. As for Donna Angela,
 she does not pretend to scholarship, though
 she is extremely well educated. She talks
 justly, her thoughts are ingenious, her ex-
 pressions delicate, choice, and natural." " This
 last character is very amiable," says I to Mo-
 lina ; " but the other does not in my opinion
 agree in the least with the nature of the fair
 sex."

sex." "It it true," says he smiling, "but there are some of ours whose philosophy sits full as ill upon them. Our mistress," continued he, "is a little given to philosophy; what disputations shall we have here by and by! pray heaven religion do not come into the scrape."

As he ended these words, there comes in a little thin man, with a mighty grave crabbed look. My governour gave him no more quarter than the rest. "This," says he; "is one of those serious gentlemen, who, by means of a few sentences out of Seneca, would fain pass for a prodigious genius, but who are no better than fots and pedants, if you look farther into them." Afterwards came a cavalier very genteel, and of a Greek mien, that is, one who seemed to be mighty well pleased with himself. I asked who it was? "This," says Molina, "is a dramatic poet: he has in his life-time made a hundred thousand verses that have not got him a groat; but to make amends for that, he has lately, with six lines of prose, made his fortune at one clap."

As I was about to desire him to explain this riddle, we heard a great noise upon the staircase. "Oh," cries the governour, "here comes the Licentiate Campanario. You may know him by the bustle he makes before he appears. He begins to talk the moment he enters the doors, and never gives over till he goes out again." Indeed we were almost stunned with the eternal larum of the licentiate, who entered the antechamber with a
bachelor

bachelor of arts of his acquaintance; and never gave his tongue the least intermission till the visit was ended. "Signior Campanario," says I to Molina, "is, I suppose, a very great wit." "Ay," replies my governour, "he has sometimes very brilliant thoughts, and out-of-the-way expressions. He is good company enough; but then, besides his being an everlasting talker, he is often forced to repeat what he has said before, or else he would be sometimes at a loss for prate; to tell you my mind, I fancy the comical look with which he seasons every thing, is the greatest part of his merit. There are very few of his sayings would do well in a jest-book."

There afterwards came several other persons, whom Molina described to me in the same manner. He did not forget to give me the Marchioness's picture among the rest. "Our mistress," says he, "has a good deal of sense, notwithstanding her philosophy. She is not very hard to please, which makes her service agreeable and easy. She is one of the most reasonable women of quality that I know. She has no manner of passion. She loves play no more than she does gallantry: her whole pleasure is in conversation. Few ladies would like to live as she does." This eulogium gave me a mighty good opinion of my mistress. Yet a few days afterwards I could not help suspecting that she was not quite so averse to love as he described her to be; and the cause of my suspicion was this.

One morning, while she was at her toilet,

there comes to me a little man about forty years old ; he was the most disagreeable figure I ever saw in my life ; more greatly than Pedro de Moya the author, and extremely hump-backed into the bargain. He told me he wanted to speak with her Ladyship. I asked him who he came from. "From no body," replied he sternly. "Tell her I am the cavalier about whom she talked with Donna Anna de Velasco yesterday." I desired him to walk in, and then went to tell my mistress who was there. The Marchioness burst out immediately into an exclamation, and in a transport of joy bid me bring him in. She not only received him favourably, but obliged all her women to leave the room ; so that my Lord Crump, more happy than a man of merit, remained with her alone. The maids and I could not help laughing at this adventure : he staid with her almost an hour, after which my mistress waited upon him out with such civility and compliment as shewed she was wondrously pleased with him.

And indeed she had taken such a liking to his conversation, that at night she said to me in private, "Gil Blas, when the hump-backed gentleman comes again, bring him up to my apartment as privately as ever you can." I obeyed. When the little cavalier came next, which was the very morning following, I carried him into my Lady's chamber by a back pair of stairs. I very piously did the same thing two or three times, without imagining there could be any gallantry between

tween them two. But the malignity so natural to mankind, soon gave me strange fancies, and I concluded that the Marchioness had either very odd inclinations, or else that this spark was a sort of a go-between.

In this opinion I often said to myself: "If my mistress is in love with any handsome gentleman, I forgive her: but if she can like such a nasty baboon as this fellow, her depravation of taste is unpardonable." How much was I out of my conjecture! The little man, it seems, was a pretender to magic, and having been mightily cried up to the Marchioness, who was easily bubbled by such sort of quacks, she was extremely desirous of talking with him in private. He shewed things in a glass, and for money revealed all the mysteries of the *Cabala*: or, to speak more truly, he was a juggler, that maintained himself at the expense of credulous people, and by the contributions of several foolish women of quality.

C H A P. IX.

What accident obliged Gil Blas to leave the Marchioness de Chaves, and the course he took afterwards.

I Had now lived six months with the Marchioness de Chaves, and I own I was very well satisfied with my condition; but fate, which must be obeyed, would not suffer me to stay any longer in the family of that lady,
nor

nor even at Madrid. The adventure which obliged me to leave both, was as follows.

Among my mistress's women there was one whose name was Portia. She was not only young and handsome, but of so good a character, that I was resolved to make my addresses to her, not knowing her heart was to be disputed for before it was won. The Marchioness's secretary, a proud jealous-pated coxcomb, was in love with my goddess. He no sooner discovered my passion, than, without trying to find out how Portia received it, he resolved to fight me. With this intent he challenged me to meet him one morning in a very private place. As he was a short man, and hardly reached up to my shoulders, I did not look upon him as an adversary at all to be feared: I repaired boldly therefore to the field of battle. I was confident of gaining the victory, and hoped it would make me more agreeable in the eyes of Portia: but the event did not answer my expectations. The little secretary, who had been three years at the fencing-school, disarmed me in a moment, as if I had been a mere infant, and putting his sword to my throat: "Prepare yourself," says he, "to die this instant, or give me your word of honour, never to think any more of Portia, and to leave the Marchioness's house this very day." I made him the promise he demanded, and kept it without regret. I was ashamed to appear again before my fellow-servants, after having been so shamefully defeated, and particularly before the beautiful Helen, who had
been

been the subject of our dispute. I went home to fetch my money and cloaths, and directed my steps towards Toledo that very day; my purse very well furnished, and my back laden with a bundle, consisting of what few things I had. Though I was not under any obligation to leave Madrid, yet I thought it would be best to do so, at least for a few years. I formed a resolution of travelling over all Spain, and staying a little while at every town. "The money I am master of," says I to myself, "will go a great way. I will not lay it out profusely. And when it is gone, I can but return to service. A man of my capacity need not fear getting places enough, whenever he thinks fit to look out for them."

I had a particular desire to see Toledo. I arrived there in three days. I took a lodging in a very good inn, where I passed for a cavalier of figure, by means of the fine cloaths I wore, and the airs I gave myself. I might, if I pleased, have had affairs with several handsome women that lived in the neighbourhood; but knowing that such things were very chargeable, I put a bridle upon my desires; and having always an itch for rambling, after I had seen every thing in Toledo that is worth the sight, I left it one day very early in the morning, and took the road to Cuenca, with a design to go to Arragon. On the second day, I went into an inn which I saw on the road; and while I was refreshing myself, there came in a company of alguazils.

These

These gentlemen called for wine, and fell to drinking. Whilst they were at this agreeable diversion, I heard them describe a young man whom they had orders to arrest. "The cavalier," says one of them, "is not above three and twenty. He has long black hair, a Roman nose, is well-shaped, and rides upon a bay horse."

I heard them, without seeming at all to mind what they said, and, indeed, it was none of my business. I left them in the inn, and continued my journey. I was hardly got half a mile further, when I met a young cavalier, very genteel, and mounted upon a chesnut-coloured horse. "I will be hanged," says I to myself, "if this is not the man the alguazils are in quest of. He has long black hair, and a Roman nose. Perhaps I may do him a good office." "Sir," says I, "give me leave to ask you if you have not upon your hands some affair of honour." The young man looked at me without making any reply, and seemed very much surpris'd at my question. I assured him it was not curiosity only that made me so impertinent. He was thoroughly convinced it was not, when I had told him what I had heard in the inn. "Generous stranger," says he, "I cannot help owning to you, that I have cause to believe it is me the alguazils are searching for. Therefore I will immediately take some other road to avoid them." It is my advice," replied I, "that we seek out some place where you may be in safety, and which may shelter us both
from

from a storm of rain which I see in the air, and which looks as if it would soon fall." At the same time we reached a row of thick-spreading trees, which led us to the foot of a mountain, where we found a hermitage.

It was a large deep grotto, which time had made in the mountain, and to which the hand of man had added a sort of front made of stones and shells, and covered all over with turf. The ground all about it was embroidered with a thousand sorts of flowers, which perfumed the air, and near the grotto there was a little opening, out of which gushed a spring of water that ran in streams all along a meadow. At the entry of this solitary lodging, stood a holy hermit, who seemed depressed with extreme old age. With one hand he leaned upon a stick, and in the other he held a rosary, of at least twenty strings of large beads. His head was buried in a cap of brown cloth with long ears to it, and his beard, which was whiter than snow, fell down to his girdle. We went up to him: "Father," says I, "permit us to beg a shelter of you against the storm which threatens us." "Come in, my children," replied the anchoret, after having looked wistly upon me: "This hermitage is open to you, and you may stay in it as long as you please. As for your horse," added he, shewing us the out-front of the cell, "it will stand there very dry." The cavalier, who was with me, put his horse where he was directed, and we followed the hermit into the grotto.

We

We were no sooner got in, than there fell a great shower of rain, mixed with a terrible storm of lightning and thunder. The hermit fell upon his knees before an image of St Pacomo, which was fastened to the wall, and we, following his example, did the same. The thunder soon gave over. We got up; but as the rain continued, and night was not very far off, the old man said to us: "Children, I would not advise you to continue your journey through so much rain, unless your affairs are very pressing." We answered, "That we had none to hinder us from staying there; and that if we did not incommode him, we should be glad to pass the night in his hermitage." "You will not in the least incommode me," replied the hermit. "You will be the persons most uneasy. You will have but an ill lodging, and I have no better than an anchoret's repast to offer you."

After having said this, the holy man made us sit down at a little table, and presenting us some onions, with a morsel of bread, and a jug of water: "My sons," says he, "you see my ordinary sustenance; but for your sake I will indulge myself a little to-day." With this he fetched out a slice of cheese, and two handful of nuts, which he spread upon the table. The young gentleman, who had no great appetite, did not praise this food much by his eating. "I see," says the hermit, "you have been used to far better tables than mine; or, to speak more properly, sensuality has corrupted your natural taste. I have lived in

in the world, as you do now. The most delicious meats, the most exquisite ragouts were hardly good enough for me; but since I have lived in this solitary course of life, I have restored my taste to its original purity. I have no taste now for any thing but roots, milk, and the fruits of the earth; in a word, for nothing but what our first fathers lived upon.

While he was thus speaking, the young gentleman fell into a deep musing. The hermit perceived it: "My son," says he, "you have something lies heavy upon your mind. May not I know what it is? Unbosom yourself to me. It is not curiosity that induces me to press you thus. I do it out of pure charity. My age enables me to give advice, and perhaps your circumstances stand in need of it." "Yes, father," replied the cavalier, sighing, "I have too surely need of it; and since you are so kind as to offer me yours, I will take it. I dare say I may safely venture to discover myself to so holy a man as you are." "You may do it, my son," said the old man, without any apprehension. "I am not used to reveal any secrets that are intrusted to me." With this assurance the cavalier begun in these words.

B O O K V.

C H A P. I.

The history of Don Alphonso, and the beautiful Seraphina.

I Shall hide nothing from you, father, nor from this gentleman. After the generosity he has shewed me, I should be the most ungrateful man upon earth to distrust him. I will relate to you all my misfortunes. I am of Madrid, and my origin is this: An officer of the German guard, called the *Baron de Steinbach*, as he was going into his own house one night, perceived at the foot of the stair-case a bundle of white linen. He took it up, and carried it into his wife's apartment, where he found it to be a new-born child, wrapped up in a very neat toilet, with a note, which declared that it belonged to persons of quality, who would some time or other make themselves known, adding, that it had been baptized, and was named *Alphonso*. I am that unhappy child, and that is all I know of my birth. I know not but that my mother may have exposed me to conceal her unlawful amours; or else, being seduced by a perjured lover, was fatally engaged in the cruel necessity of disowning me.

However it be, the Baron and his wife were moved at my fortune, and having no children, resolved to bring me up by the name of *Don Alphonso*. In proportion as I advanced in years,

years, their kindness for me increased. My innocent endearing actions made them be every moment caressing me. In short, I was so happy as to gain their love. They had me taught by all sorts of masters. My education became their only study; and far from being impatient to have my parents discover themselves, they seemed rather to wish that my birth might always remain a secret. As soon as the Baron saw me of an age fit to bear arms, he put me into the service. He obtained an ensigncy for me, gave me a suitable equipage, and to encourage me to search out opportunities of acquiring glory, he represented to me, that the race of honour was free to all the world, and that I might gain in war a name so much the more glorious, as I should owe it to nothing but my own merit. At the same time he revealed to me the secret of my birth, which till then he had kept hid from me. As I passed in Madrid for his son, and did really take myself to be such, this discovery gave me a great deal of uneasiness. I cannot think of it even yet without shame. The more my sentiments assure me that I am of a noble descent, the more confusion it gives me to reflect, that I am abandoned by my parents.

I went to serve in Flanders, but a peace was concluded soon afterwards; and Spain having no more enemies to deal with, I returned to Madrid, where the Baron and his lady gave me fresh marks of tenderness. I had been returned about two months, when one

morning a little page came into my chamber, and delivered me a letter, written, if I forget not, in these words: "I am neither ugly nor ill-shaped, and yet you often see me at my window, without taking any notice of me. This proceeding suits ill with the gallantry of your looks; and I am so vexed at it, that to be revenged I should be glad to make you in love with me."

When I had read this billet, I did not doubt but it came from a widow named *Leonora*, who lodged overagainſt our houſe, and who had the reputation of being a very great coquette. I asked the little page whether I had gueſſed right? At the firſt he acted the reſerved, but for a ducat, which I clapped into his hand, he ſatiſfied my curioſity. He even undertook to give her my answer, in which I told his miſtreſs, that I acknowledged my crime, and that I found ſhe was already half revenged.

I own I was a little taken with this ſort of courtſhip. I did not go out all day, but was very careful to ſtand at my window to watch the lady, who did not fail to be at hers. I expreſſed myſelf to her by geſtures. She answered them, and the very next day ſent me word by her little page, that if I would be in the ſtreet that night between eleven and twelve, I might talk with her at the parlour-window. Though I was not mightily ſmit-ten with ſo forward a widow, yet I returned her a very paſſionate answer, and waited for night with as much impatience as if I had
been

been really in love. When it came, I went to walk in the Prado till the hour of appointment. I was no sooner got thither, than a man, mounted upon a fine horse, alighted by me, and accosting me very roughly: "Cavalier," says he, "are not you the son of Baron Steinbach?" "I am," answered I. "You are he then that are to talk with Leonora to-night at her window? I have seen her letters and your answers. Her page shewed them me all, and I have followed you from your house hither, to teach you that you have a rival who scorns to have you dispute a heart with him.. I need say no more. We are here private enough. Draw, unless to avoid your punishment you promise to break entirely with Leonora. Sacrifice to my demands the hopes you have conceived, or you die this moment." "You should have begged this sacrifice," said I, "and not have demanded it in so haughty a manner. I might have granted it to your request; but to your threats I refuse it flatly."

"Well then," said he, having tied up his horse, "the sword must decide it. It does not become a person of my quality to descend so low as to beg any thing of one of yours. Some of my equals, if they were in my place, would be revenged of you in a less honourable manner." These last words shocked me very much; and seeing that he had already drawn his sword, I drew mine too. We fought with so much rage, that the controversy was soon decided. Whether he engaged

me with too much fury, or I had most skill, I soon gave him a mortal wound: I saw him stagger and fall. After this, thinking of nothing but how to make my escape, I took the horse he came upon, and turned into the road that leads to Toledo. I durst not go back to the Baron de Steinbach, because I knew this accident would only afflict him; and when I considered the danger I was in, I thought I could not get from Madrid soon enough.

With these, and other melancholy reflections, I travelled all the rest of the night and next morning. But about noon I was forced to stop to give my horse some rest, and to avoid the heat, which grew unsupportable. I staid in a village till sun-set, after which having a mind to get to Toledo without bating any more, I continued my journey. I was come two leagues beyond Illescas, when about midnight a storm, like this to-day, caught me in the middle of a field. I rode up to the walls of a garden which I spied at some distance, and not finding any better shelter, stood with my horse as close as ever I could to the door of a summer-house which was at the end of a wall, and over which was a balcony. As I leaned against the door, I found that it was open, which I ascribed to the negligence of the servants. I alighted, and less out of curiosity, than to be out of the rain, (which was very troublesome notwithstanding the balcony that was over my head), I entered into the summer-house with my horse, which I led by the bridle.

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During the storm I took notice of the place where I was; and though I could see nothing of it but by the help of the lightning, yet I found that the house must certainly belong to no mean person. I waited till the rain should give over, that I might be moving forward; but a great light which I perceived a pretty way farther, made me take other resolutions. I left my horse in the summer-house, and to secure him shut the door. I advanced towards the light, hoping to find somebody up in the house, that I might beg a lodging there for that night. Having gone through several alleys of trees, I came to a hall, the door of which was likewise open. I went in, and having by means of a noble crystal branch, lighted up, which hung in the midst, observed that this house was very magnificent, I did not doubt but it belonged to some person of quality. The pavement was of marble; the wainscot admirably well wrought and artfully gilt, and the ceiling seemed to be the work of the skilfullest painters. But what I observed most particularly, was a great number of busts of Spanish heroes, which stood all round the hall upon little pedestals of jasper. I had full time to take particular notice of all these things; for, though I listened very attentively, I could not hear any body stirring.

On one side of the hall there was a door which stood upon the jar. I pushed it open, and saw a long row of chambers which had not the least light in any but the last. "What shall I do now?" said I to myself: "shall

I go back to my horse, or be so bold as to venture quite to that room? I thought indeed that the wisest thing I could do was to go back; but I could not resist my curiosity, or rather the force of my stars, which hurried me along in spite of my reason. I advance: I go through all the rooms, and at length come to that in which there was a candle burning upon a marble table in a silver candlestick gilt. The furniture was all extremely noble and elegant; but my eyes were soon drawn off from that, when looking upon a bed that had the curtains half open because of the heat, I saw a young lady, who notwithstanding the noise of the thunder, which was very dreadful, was buried in a profound sleep. I stepped softly towards her, and, by the light which was in the room, discovered such features, and such a complexion as surprised me with wonder. My spirits were all disordered at the sight of so much beauty. I soon found how deeply I was smitten; but whatever constraint I put upon myself, the opinion I had of the nobleness of her blood hindered me from forming a rash thought, and my respect got the better of my passion. While I was indulging in the pleasure of viewing her, she awaked.

You may easily imagine how much she was surprised at seeing a strange man in her chamber in the dead of night. She gave a loud cry the moment she saw me. I endeavoured to appease her, and setting one knee to the earth: "Madam," said I, "be not afraid. I do not come hither to injure you. I was going

going on, but she was in such a fright, that she did not hear me. She called her women, and nobody answering her, took a night-gown which lay upon her bed, jumps out, and runs through all the apartments which I had come in by, calling to her maids, and a younger sister who was under her care. I every moment expected to see all the servants upon me, and to be punished without so much as being heard; but by good fortune nobody came at all her calling, but an old man, who could have given her no great assistance if there had been any danger. However, being somewhat encouraged by his presence, she asked me sternly who I was, and how I durst break into her house. Upon this I began to justify myself: but I had no sooner told her that I found the summer-house door open, than she cried out: "Good heavens! what a misfortune do I suspect?"

Saying this, she took the candle off the table, and ran over every room in the house, but could find neither her sister nor any of her women. She observed too that they had carried off all their things. Then her suspicions appeared but too certain: she came to me with a great deal of anger: "Traitor," says she, "don't add hypocrisy to your villany. It was not by chance you got into the house. You belong to Don Fernando de Leyva, and have a hand in this treachery. But don't hope to escape. I have still people enow left to seize you." "Madam," answered I, "do not confound me among your enemies. I don't so much

as know Don Fernando, neither did I ever see you before this accident. I am an unhappy wretch driven from Madrid by an affair of honour; and I swear by all that is sacred, that had I not been caught in the rain, I should never have set foot into your house. Instead of thinking me an accomplice in offending you, believe me rather desirous to revenge your cause." These last words, and the manner in which I pronounced them, appeased the lady, who no longer looked upon me as an enemy; but if she dismissed her anger, it was only to give the greater vent to her grief. She wept bitterly. I was moved with her tears, and was no less afflicted than herself, though I did not yet know the cause of her sorrow. I was not contented with only joining with her in her grief; impatient to revenge her injuries, I was seized with a sort of fury: "Madam," cried I, "what wrong have you received? Speak. I espouse your cause. Would you have me pursue Don Fernando, and pierce him to the heart? Name me all those you would sacrifice to your resentment. Give me your commands. Whatever dangers, whatever misfortunes lie in the way, this stranger, whom you suspect for an accomplice of your enemies, will gladly run through them all for your sake."

This transport surprised the lady, and stopped the course of her tears. "Ah, Sir," cried she, "ascribe that suspicion to the condition I am in. These generous offers have undeceived Seraphina. They even hinder me from being ashamed of having a stranger witness to
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the affront which is done my family. Yes, Sir, I own my fault, and do not refuse your assistance. But the death of Don Fernando is not what I ask." "Well then, Madam," replied I, "what other service can I do you?" "Sir," replied Seraphina, "the injury I have received is this: Don Fernando de Leyva is in love with my sister Julia, whom he saw by chance at Toledo, where we generally reside. About three months ago, he asked her in marriage of the Count de Polan my father, who refused his consent, because of an ancient enmity which has been between our families. My sister is not yet fifteen. She has certainly been so weak as to follow the pernicious advice of my women, whom Don Fernando has corrupted; and that cavalier, being informed that we were by ourselves in this country-house, has taken the opportunity to run away with Julia. I would at least know whither he has carried her, that my father and brother, who have been two months at Madrid, may take their measures accordingly. For heaven's sake," added she, "take the pains to search all the country about Toledo. Let my family be indebted to you for this piece of service."

The lady did not consider that the employment she allotted me was by no means proper for one who could not get out of Castile too fast; but how should she think of that, when I myself forgot it? Charmed with the happiness of being necessary to the most amiable woman in the world, I gladly accepted of

of the commission, and promised to acquit myself of it with as much zeal as dispatch. And in effect, I did not defer the execution of my promise even so long as till it was day. I that moment left Seraphina, and begging her to forgive the fright I had put her into, and assuring her she should quickly hear from me, I went out the same way I came in, but with my thoughts so full of the lady, that it was but too plain I was deeply in love. I perceived it too by the joy with which I served her, and the amorous chimæras I formed in my mind. I fancied that Seraphina, though plunged in grief, might have observed my growing love, and perhaps observed it with some little pleasure: and I imagined, if I could bring her certain news of her sister, and this affair should come to a happy conclusion, the whole honour of it would be mine.

Here Don Alphonso interrupted the thread of his story, and said to the old hermit: "I beg you would pardon me, father, if my passion makes me dwell upon circumstances which without doubt seem tedious to you." "No, no, Sir," replied the anchoret, "not at all. I am rather glad I know how far you are taken with this young lady, because I shall the better know how to give you advice.

With my head full of these vain imaginations, continued the young gentleman, I was two days together upon the hunt after Julia's ravisher; but notwithstanding all my diligence I could not find the least footstep of him. Very much mortified to see all my care so fruitless,

fruitless, I returned to Seraphina, whom I feared I should find in the greatest uneasiness. But she was more calm than I could hope. She told me she had been more successful than I; that she knew what was become of her sister; that she had received a letter from Don Fernando himself, wherein he told her, that, after having been privately married to Julia, he had placed her in a convent at Toledo. "I have sent his letter to my father," added Seraphina. "I hope this business will be concluded to our wishes, and a solemn marriage put an end to the hatred which has so long divided our families."

When she had told me this, she spoke of the trouble she had given me, and the danger she had imprudently exposed me to, in desiring me to pursue a ravisher, without considering I had told her that an affair of honour obliged me to fly my country. She made excuses for this fault in the most obliging terms. As I wanted some repose, she carried me into a parlour, where we both sat down. She had on a night-gown of white taffety striped with black, with a little hat of the same silk adorned with black feathers, which made me suppose she was a widow. But she seemed so young, that I hardly knew how to think her so. If I was desirous to be informed about her condition, she was no less curious to know who I was. She begged me to tell her my name; because, she said, my noble mien, and especially the generous pity I had shewn for her concerns, made her almost sure that I

was of some considerable family. The question perplexed me. I blushed and was confounded; but thinking it less shame to lie than to own the truth, I answered that I was the son of the Baron de Steinbach, an officer in the German guard. "And what is the affair which obliges you to leave Madrid," said she? "I may venture to promise you what interest either my father or brother Don Gaspar have at court. This is the least I can do for a gentleman, who to serve me has neglected even the care of his own life." I did not at all scruple to relate to her the whole circumstances of my duel. She blamed very much the man I had killed, and promised me the intercession of all her family.

When I had satisfied her curiosity, I desired her to do the same by mine. I asked her if her faith were engaged or free. "It is now three years," replied she, "since my father obliged me to marry Don Diego de Lara, and I have been a widow fifteen months." "Madam," said I, "what misfortune deprived you of your husband so soon?" "I will tell you," Sir, answered the lady, "in return of the confidence you have reposed in me."

"Don Diego de Lara," continued she, "was a very fine gentleman; but though he had a violent passion for me, and put in practice to please me, all the arts which the most tender lover can think of to make himself agreeable to the woman he loves; in short, though he had a thousand good qualities, he could not touch my heart. Love is not al-
ways

ways the effect of long assiduity or well-known merit; but alas!" added she, "one that we do not know often enchants us at the first sight. I could not therefore love him. I was more confounded than charmed with the marks of his passion; and if I sometimes in secret accused myself of ingratitude, I could not help thinking that I too was very much to be pitied. To his torment and my own, his delicacy exceeded his love. From the minutest words or actions he construed my most private thoughts. He was every moment complaining of my indifference; and thought himself the more unhappy in not being able to win my heart, because he knew that no rival had prevented him in the conquest: for I was hardly yet sixteen, and before he made his addresses to me, he had been in see with all my women, who assured him that nobody else had been beforehand with him in my affection. "Yes, Seraphina," would he often say to me, "I could wish you were prepossessioned in favour of some other, provided that were the only cause of your coldness to me. My tenderness and your virtue would triumph over such a passion; but I now despair of winning your heart, since all the love I have shewed you has had no manner of effect upon it. Being weary of hearing the same things so often repeated, I told him that instead of troubling his own repose and mine by too much delicacy, he had better leave it to time. And indeed, at my age, I was not very capable of tasting the refinements of so delicate

a passion, and Don Diego would have done very well to have taken my advice; but at a whole year's end, finding himself just where he was at first, he lost all patience, or rather all reason; and pretending to have an important affair at court, he went to Flanders a volunteer, and soon obtained what he desired, namely, the end of his life and miseries."

After the lady had made me this relation, our discourse turned upon the singular character of her husband. We were interrupted by the arrival of a messenger who delivered to Seraphina a letter from the Count de Polan. See begged leave of me to read it; and I observed as she read it she trembled and grew pale. After having finished it, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, fetched a deep sigh, and in a moment her cheeks were drowned in tears. I could not see her grief without uneasiness. I began to be troubled, and, as if I had foreseen the misfortune which was approaching, a deadly terror froze up all my spirits. "Madam," said I with a great deal of emotion, "may I ask what new calamity that note acquaints you with?" "There, Sir," answered Seraphina mournfully, and giving me the letter; "do you yourself read what my father says to me. Alas! you are but too nearly concerned in it."

I took the letter trembling, and read these words in it.

Your

YOur brother Don Gaspard fought a duel yesterday in the Prado. He received a mortal wound, of which he died this day; and he declared at his death, that the gentleman who killed him is son to the Baron de Steinbach, an officer in the German guard. To add to my sorrow, the murderer is escaped me. He is fled; but let him hide himself where he will, I do not doubt discovering him. I am now writing to some governours who will not fail to seize him, if he passes through any town in their jurisdiction, and by this means I hope to stop up all the roads he can possibly take.

Count de POLAN.

I leave you to judge what disorder this letter threw me into. I remained for some moments without either sense or motion. I considered what an irreparable blow the death of her brother gave to all my hopes. This thought run me to despair. I threw myself at Seraphina's feet, and offering her my naked sword, "Madam," said I, "save your father the trouble of pursuing a man, who may else escape his strictest search. Do you yourself revenge your brother. Sacrifice to him his murderer with your own hand. Strike. Let this very sword, which deprived him of life, become fatal to his wretched enemy." "Sir," replied Seraphina something moved at this action, "I loved Don Gaspard. Though you killed him fairly, and he pulled his death upon himself, yet you must needs believe I join with my father in his resentment. Yes, Don

Alphonso, I am your enemy, and will perform every thing that the friendship I owed my brother requires of me. But I will not take advantage of your ill fortune, notwithstanding it delivers you into my hands. If honour arms me against you, it at the same time forbids me revenging myself basely. The rights of hospitality ought to be inviolable, and I will not repay the services you have done me, with taking away your life. Fly, and if possible escape our pursuit and the rigour of the laws, and save your head from the danger that threatens it."

"What, Madam," replied I, "have it you in your power to revenge yourself, and do you appeal to the laws which perhaps will deceive your resentment? Ah! pierce a wretch that does not deserve your pity. No, Madam, do not observe so noble and generous a proceeding towards me. Do you know who I am? All Madrid believes me the son of the Baron de Steinbach, and I am only a creature he has brought up out of compassion. Nay, I do not so much as know who are my parents." "No matter," interrupted Seraphina with precipitation, as if these last words had given her fresh uneasiness, "were you the very outcast of mankind, I would do what honour commands me." "Well then, Madam," said I, "since not even a brother's death will provoke you to shed my blood, I will stir up your hatred by a new crime, the boldness of which I hope you will never excuse. I adore you. I could not behold your
charms

charms without being struck with them, and in spite of the obscurity of my birth I entertained hopes of seeing you mine. I was so far in love, or rather besotted, as to flatter myself that heaven, which perhaps does me a kindness in concealing my family from me, would one day reveal it, and that I might without blushing discover my name to you. After so bold a confession as this, will you still scruple to punish me?"

"This presumption," answered the lady, "would certainly have offended me at any other time; but now I ascribe it to the disorder you are in. Once more therefore, Don Alphonso," added she, shedding some tears, "be gone. Fly from a house which you fill with mourning: every moment you stay here increases my disturbance." "I no longer disobey, Madam," replied I rising, "I must avoid your sight. But do not imagine I shall be so careful of a life which you abhor, as to endeavour to find a place where I may lie concealed. No, I am wholly devoted to your resentment. I will go to Toledo, and impatiently wait there for the destiny you shall please to allot me, and by delivering myself up to your pursuits, hasten as much as possible the end of all my miseries."

Having said this, I retired. My horse was given me, and I went straight to Toledo: where I staid eight days, and where indeed I took so little care to hide myself, that I wonder I was not seized; for I cannot believe the Count de Polan, who had been so careful to shut up all
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the roads against me, should have no manner of suspicion of my being at Toledo. At length, yesterday I left that city, where I seemed to be weary of being at liberty, and without minding where I went, am come to this hermitage, like a man that had nothing to fear. This, father, is what makes me melancholy. I beg you to assist me with your advice.

C H A P. II.

Who the old hermit appeared to be, and how Gil Blas found that he was among his old acquaintance.

WHen Don Alphonso had ended the melancholy relation of his misfortunes, the old hermit said to him: "My son, you were very imprudent in staying so long at Toledo. I look with another eye upon every thing else that you have told me. Your love for Seraphina is mere madness. I would have you by all means endeavour to forget that lady, since she can never be yours. Do not think to oppose the obstacles which part you from her, but yield to your stars, which seem to promise you adventures enow. No doubt you will meet with some young lady or other, who will make the same impression upon you, and whose aversion you will not have incurred by killing a brother."

He was going to proceed in his exhortations to Don Alphonso, when there entered the hermitage another hermit laden with a wallet soundly

soundly stuffed. He had been making a plentiful gathering of alms in the city of Cuenca. He seemed younger than his companion, and had a very thick red beard. "Welcome, brother Anthony," said the old anchoret, "what news from town?" "Bad enough of all conscience," replied brother Sorrel-pate, giving him a paper done up in form of a letter; "that note will inform you farther." The old man opened it, and having read it with all the attention it deserved, cried out: "God be praised for every thing! since the plot is discovered, we must take our course. Let us now talk in another style," continued he. "Signior Don Alphonso, you behold a man, who, like yourself, is the foot-ball of fortune. I hear from Cuenca, which is a town about a league off, that somebody has blackened me to the magistracy, and that the rabble of serjeants, alguazils, and archers, are to set out to-morrow to lay hold of my worship in this hermitage. But they will hardly find the hare in her form. This is not the first time I have been in the like perplexity: but, thank God! I have generally brought myself off like a man of wit and contrivance. I must now appear in a new shape; for, let me look how I will, I am no more an old man than I am a faint."

Having said this, he pulled off his long gown, and underneath it appeared a waistcoat of black serge, with the sleeves cut. Then he pulled off his cap, untied a pack-thread which held on his false beard, and took the

the shape of a man of about eight and twenty or thirty years old. Brother Anthony, after his example, threw off his hermit's dress, pulled off his red beard in the same manner as his companion, and took out of an old wooden box a short shabby cassock which he put on. But imagine my surprise, when, in the person of the old anchoret, I saw Signior Don Raphael, and in brother Anthony, my dear trusty valet Ambrose de Lamela. "Hey boys!" cried I: "I find I am among old acquaintance." "You are so, Signior Gil Blas," said Don Raphael laughing, "you have here met with a couple of your friends, when you least expected it. I own you have some little reason to complain of us; but forget what is past, and let us return thanks to Heaven for bringing us together again. Ambrose and myself are entirely at your devotion, and our services are not so very contemptible. Do not look upon us as rogues and villains. We neither bid any body stand upon the highway, nor commit murder. We only endeavour to live at other people's expense; and if stealing is an unjust action, necessity in some manner diminishes the crime. Associate yourself with us, and live a wandering life. I can tell you it is very pleasant, when one knows how to manage himself with prudence. It is true, in spite of all our prudence, a long chain of secondary causes does now and then bring upon us a few unlucky businesses: but, no matter; we meet with good success, more than enough to outbalance that. We are
accustomed

accustomed to change of weather, and variety of fortune.

“Signior Cavalier,” continued the false hermit, speaking to Don Alphonso, “we make you the same offer, and I do not think you ought to refuse it in the circumstances you seem to be in; for, not to speak of the affair which obliges you to conceal yourself, I dare say you are not master of a great deal of ready cash.” “No really,” said Don Alphonso; “and that, I own, increases my uneasiness.” “Well then,” replied Don Raphael, “join with us: you cannot do better. You shall want nothing, and we will engage to frustrate all the pursuits of your enemies. We are so used to rambling, that we are acquainted with every inch of ground throughout Spain. We know all the woods, mountains, and other places where a man may be safe from the brutality of justice.” Don Alphonso thanked them for their good-will; and being indeed without either money or refuge, resolved to accompany them. I came into the same design, because I did not care to quit that young man, for whom I found in myself a very great kindness and affection.

We all four agreed to go together, and not to part. It was afterwards deliberated whether we should begin our travels immediately, or first have a stroke or two at a vessel full of excellent wine, which brother Anthony had brought the day before from Cuenca: but Raphael, who had more experience in these affairs than any of us, represented that

that we should first of all take care of our persons; that we had better travel all night in order to get to a very thick wood, which was between Villardeffa and Almodabar; that there we might halt and spend the day in rest and quietness. This opinion was followed. The false hermits made a couple of bundles of what things and provisions they had there, and put them like panniers upon Don Alphonso's horse. This being done with very great dispatch, we began to be jogging away from the hermitage, leaving to justice the two hermits gowns, with the white beard and the red beard, two little beds, a table, and a nasty rotten box, two old matted chairs, and the image of St Pacomo.

We travelled all that night, and began to grow very weary, when at break of day we saw the woods to which we directed our steps. The sight of port gives new vigour to mariners fatigued with a long voyage. We redoubled our speed, and came at length to the end of our stage before sunrise. We pierced into the thickest of the wood, and stopped in a very agreeable place, upon a green spot of grass, surrounded by several large oaks, whose interwoven branches formed a shade which the sun, in its greatest heat, was not able to break through. We unbridled the horse, after we had unloaded him, to let him feed. We sat down. We took out of brother Anthony's wallet some great pieces of bread, with several bits of roasted meat, and to it we fell, as if we tried who could eat fastest.

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Yet, though our appetite was very poignant, we made it be contented to stay a little now and then, while we attacked the wine, which never stood still, but passed round incessantly from one to the other.

When we had finished our meal, Don Raphael said to Don Alphonso: "Signior Cavalier, after the confidence you have reposed in me, it is but just I tell you the story of my life with the same freedom." "I shall hear it with a great deal of pleasure," said the young gentleman: "And as for me," cried I, "I am impatient to know your adventures. I dare say they are very curious." "So they are, I can promise you," replied Raphael, "and I intend to write them when I am grown old; but I am young as yet, and willing to swell the volume a little bigger. But we are all fatigued. Let us take a nap for an hour or two. While we three sleep, Ambrose will be upon the watch, for fear of some surprise, and then he may sleep in his turn. Though I believe we are very safe in this place, yet it is good to be upon one's guard." Having said this, he stretched himself out upon the grass. Don Alphonso did the same, and Lamela stood centinel.

Don Alphonso, instead of taking his repose, fell to ruminating upon his misfortunes; and I for my part could not sleep a wink. As for Don Raphael, he soon fell to snoring. But he waked an hour afterwards, and seeing us in a readiness to listen to him, he said to Lamela: "Friend Ambrose, you may now have

your nap, if you have a mind to it." "No, no," replied Lamela: "I am not at all disposed to sleep; and though I already know every action of your whole life, yet they are so instructive for men of our profession, that I cannot hear them too often." Don Raphael, therefore, immediately began the story of his life in these terms.

C H A P. III.

The story of Don Raphael.

MY mother was a player at Madrid; famed for her active qualifications, but much more for her passive: her name was *Lucinda*. As for a father, I should be very bold, to say it was this or that man. A certain person of quality was indeed in love with my mother at the time of my birth; but to fix upon that date, would be no convincing proof that he was the author of my birth: a woman of my mother's profession is so little to be trusted, that at the very time when she seems to have all the fondness in the world for her keeper, it is a hundred to one she finds him a journeyman for his money.

There is nothing like setting one's self above scandal. *Lucinda*, instead of bringing me up at home in obscurity, took me by the hand, and without any ceremony led me to the playhouse; not troubling her head in the least about people's talk. I short, I was fondled and caressed by all the men that came to the house. Perhaps it was because they thought they had a hand in getting me.

I was suffered to spend the first twelve years of my life in all manner of idleness. They scarce taught me to read and write; much less to know the principles of religion. All I learned was to dance, sing, and play on the guitarre. This was the sum of my qualifications, when the Marquis de Leganez would needs have me to be with an only son of his, a youth much about my age. Lucinda readily yielded to it, and then it was I began to have serious thoughts. The young gentleman was no greater proficient than myself: he was not cut out for a philosopher. He could hardly say his Christ-cross-row, though he had had a preceptor fifteen months. His other masters made no better a hand on it: he quite tired them out. They were not suffered to use any severities with him: they had orders to instruct him, but not lay a finger on him; and this prohibition, joined to little master's natural indisposition to science, rendered all their endeavours perfectly abortive.

But the preceptor hit upon a pretty expedient to frighten the young lord without contravening his father's orders. He took a resolution to whip me, forsooth, whenever young Leganez deserved the rod; nor did he fail to do as he resolved. I did not at all relish this expedient of his. So I ran away, and complained to my mother of so unjust a treatment. Whatever natural fondness she had for me, she was so discreet, as not to be overcome by my tears: and esteeming it a great advantage for her son to live with the Mar-

quis of Leganez, she had me presently carried back. And now you see me once again in the preceptor's clutches! The good man finding his stratagem had produced a good effect, went on in his old trade of flogging me instead of my Lord, and, in order to make the deeper impression upon his Lordship, he laid it upon my worship thick and threefold. Poor Pilgarlic went to pot once a-day to be sure. I can safely say my young master did not learn one letter of the alphabet but what cost me a hundred lashes at the least; judge you how much his grammar stood me in.

Whipping was not the only mortification I was to endure in this family: as I was known to every body, the meanest of the servants, the very scullions, twitted me in the teeth about my birth. This so vexed me, that one day I e'en brushed off with what ready money I met with belonging to the preceptor: it might amount to about a hundred and fifty ducats: and thus I revenged myself for the undeserved jerkings he had given me. This trick, though it was the first I ever tried my hand at, I managed with a great deal of subtilty; and had the cunning to elude the strict search that was made for me two days running. I hastened from Madrid, and went to Toledo, without seeing any body at my heels.

I was then entering into my fifteenth year. O what pleasure it is to be, at that age, independent, lord of one's self, accountable to none, like the first man in paradise alone! I scraped

scraped acquaintance with some young fellows, who took me in, and soon helped me off with my ducats. I afterwards associated myself with knights of the post, who so well cultivated my happy dispositions, that in a short time I was at the head of that noble order. At five years end, the toy took me i' the head to travel: I took leave of my comrades, and being desirous to begin my travels through Estremadura, I set my face towards Alcantara; but ere I got thither, an occasion offered of exercising my talents, and I did not let it slip. Being afoot, and loaded too with a plaguy heavy knapsack, I stopt every now and then to rest me under the trees, which invited me with their shady boughs at some little distance from the road.

I found a couple of young striplings conversing very pleasantly together, and taking the fresh air upon the green grass. I saluted them with abundance of civility, and entered into discourse with them, which they did not seem at all displeased with. The oldest of the two was not fifteen. They were very frank with me: "Signior Cavalier," said the youngest to me, "we are sons of two rich citizens in Placentia. We are very desirous to see the kingdom of Portugal, and to satisfy our curiosity, have made bold to borrow each of us a hundred pistoles of his father. Though we go afoot, this money will carry us a great way, as we shall mange it. What think you?" "If I had as much," said I, "I should know no end of my travels. I would

see every quarter of the world. The deuce! two hundred pistoles! Why, it is an immense sum of money. It will last you for ever. If you have a mind to it, Gentlemen," adds I, "I will do myself the honour to accompany you as far as the city of Almeria, where I am going to take possession of the goods and chattels of an uncle who went and settled there about twenty years since."

My young cits told me they should be very glad of my company. Therefore when we had rested ourselves a little, we directed our march to Alcantara, whither we arrived long before night. We went to a very good inn. We asked for a room, and they shewed us one wherein was a closet which had a lock and key to it. We ordered supper; and while it was getting ready, I proposed to go take a little walk in the town. They readily agreed. We locked up our knapsacks in the closet, of which one of the cits took the key, and out we went. We looked into several of the churches and while we were in the greatest, I pretended suddenly to have forgot a very important piece of business. "Gentlemen," said I to my comrades, "I have this moment be-thought myself that a friend of mine of Toledo, charged me to deliver a certain message to a tradesman that lives near this church. I beg you would stay for me here. I will be back in a moment." With this I left them. I run to the inn, fly to the closet; force open the lock, and searching in the knapsacks of my young sparks, find all their pistoles. Poor souls!

souls ! I did not leave them one to pay for their lodging. After this, I made all the haste I could out of the town, and took the road to Merida, without troubling my head about what became of them.

This adventure enabled me to travel very agreeably. Though young, I found myself capable of managing prudently. I may say, that for my age I was as apt as any body. I turned my knapsack into a portmanteau, and began to take a little more upon me. The third day I overtook a man who was singing vespers very heartily in the open road. I guessed him presently to be a chantor, and thereupon said to him : “ Courage, Signior Bachelor, you sing well, I find your heart is upon your business.” “ Signior,” replied he, “ I am a chantor at your service, and I am willing to exercise my voice, for fear of losing it.”

In this manner we entered into conversation. I soon perceived that I was got into company with a very witty fellow, and a boon companion I warrant him. He was about four or five and twenty. He being afoot, I rid but slowly, that I might have his company. Among other things, we talked of Toledo. “ I know that city perfectly well,” said the chantor ; “ I have lived there a considerable time, I have some good hearty friends there too.” “ In what part of Toledo did you live ?” interrupted I. “ In the New street,” answered he. “ I lodged with Don Vincent de Buena Garra, Don Matthias de Cordel,

Cordel, and two or three other honest cavaliers. We slept, we ate together, and passed away the time very agreeably. These words surprised me, for you must observe that these gentlemen were the very sharpers I had quitted at Toledo. "Signior Chantor," cried I, "these very gentlemen are all of my acquaintance, and I myself have lived with them in the New street." "I understand you," replied he, smiling; "I suppose then that you were a member of the society since the three years I have quitted it." "Yes," replied I, "I have just left those cavaliers, because I have a mighty itch for travelling. I intend to make the tour of all Spain. I shall be a greater master of my business when I have more experience." "Certainly," said he, "the best way to perfect one's self, is to travel. That is the reason too why I left Toledo, though I spent my time there very agreeably." "I return thanks to Heaven," continued he, "for throwing in my way a knight of my own order, when I least expected it. Let us join our forces, and travel together: let us make irruptions into the purse of our neighbour, and catch hold of all occasions that offer, to exercise our talents."

He made this proposal so heartily, and with so good a grace, that I immediately accepted it. He won my confidence entirely, by giving me his. We opened our hearts to one another. I gave him an account of my adventures, and he frankly told me his. He informed me that he came from Portalegro, from whence

whence a piece of knavery, which unluckily happened to be discovered, obliged him to remove with all the haste he could, under that disguise. After he had given me a full relation of his affairs, we resolved to go try our fortune at Merida, there give some proof of our skill, and then be gone somewhere else. From that moment our goods became common between us both. It is true, *Moralez*, which was the name of my companion, was in no very flowing circumstances. All he had was five or six ducats, and a few things which he carried in a wallet; but if I was richer than himself in ready money, he was more consummate than I in the art of sharpening. We rode upon my mule by turns, and arrived in this manner at Merida.

We stopt at an inn in the suburbs, where my comrade took out of his wallet a suit of cloaths; which he had no sooner put on, than we went out to see the town, and to look out for a job. We took notice of every thing we saw. Homer would have compared us to two kites prying about in the fields for birds which they might make a prey of. In short, we begged Fortune to give us some opportunity of employing our industry; when suddenly we spied in the street a cavalier, grey with age, who was fighting sword in hand with three men that pushed him vigorously. This unequal combat shocked us, and as I naturally loved fighting, I flew to the assistance of the old man. *Moralez* followed my example. We charged

charged the cavalier's three adversaries, and soon put them to flight.

The old man returned us a million of thanks. "We are extremely glad," said I, "that we were here so luckily to help you: but pray let us know at least whom we have been so fortunate as to serve; and do us the favour to inform us why those three men would have murdered you?" "Gentlemen," replied he, "I am too much obliged to you to refuse to satisfy your curiosity. My name is *Jerome de Moyadas*, and I live in this town upon what I have. One of those assassins is a lover of my daughter. He asked her of me a few days ago, and because I refused him my consent, he attacked me thus haply to be revenged." "May one be so bold as to inquire," replied I, "what was the reason of your refusing this cavalier your daughter?" "I will tell you," said he. "I had a brother a merchant here in this town; his name was *Austin*. About two months ago being at Calatrava, he lodged in the house of *Juan Velez de la Menbrilla*, his correspondent. They were intimate friends; and my brother, to strengthen their friendship more than ever, promised *Florentina* my only daughter, to his correspondent's son, not doubting but I would stand to his promise. And indeed my brother being returned to *Merida*, had no sooner named this match to me, than for his sake I agreed to it. He sent *Florentina's* picture to Calatrava; but alas! he had not the satisfaction of finishing the work he had begun; he died about three weeks

weeks ago. Upon his deathbed he begged
 me not to dispose of my daughter to any but
 the son of his correspondent. I promised him I
 would not; and this is the reason why I would
 not give Florentina to the cavalier who just
 now attacked me, though else he would be a
 very advantageous match. My word is my
 bond. I expect the son of Juan Velez de
 Menbrilla here every day, that he may have
 my daughter, though I never yet saw him any
 more than his father. I hope you will excuse
 the tediousness of this story," continued Je-
 rôme de Moyadas, "with which I should not
 have troubled you, if you had not desired it."

I listened very attentively to this relation,
 and having hit upon a design which I was
 mightily tickled with, I affected a great a-
 mazement. I lifted up my eyes to heaven.
 Then turning to the old man, I said in a pa-
 thetic tone: "Ah! Signior de Moyadas, is
 it possible that, at my very arrival at Merida, I
 should be so happy as to save my father-in-
 law's life?" These words strangely surprised
 the old man, and Moralez no less, who testi-
 fied by his countenance, that he thought me
 a very extraordinary knave. "What do I
 hear?" replied the old man. "Is it possible
 you should be the son of my brother's corre-
 spondent?" "Yes, Signior Jerome de Moya-
 das," replied I very impudently, and throw-
 ing my arms about his neck, "I am the hap-
 py mortal for whom the adorable Florentina
 is decreed. But before I shew the joy it gives
 me to be allied to your family, permit me to
 shed

shed in your bosom the tears which the memory of your brother Austin brings afresh to my eyes. I should be the most ungrateful wretch upon earth, if I were not deeply concerned for the death of a man to whom I owe the whole happiness of my life." With this I again embraced the good man, and put finger in eye as to wipe away my tears. Moralez, who soon conceived the advantage we might make of this business, did not fail to second me. He made as if he were my valet, and began to grieve with me for the death of Signior Austin. "Ah! Signior Jerome," cried he, "what a loss have you had in that brother of yours? The honestest man! the very phoenix of merchants, a disinterested merchant, an honest merchant, a merchant that has left few behind him that can compare with him."

The man we had to deal with was simple and credulous; far from suspecting any roguery, he put a helping hand to the plot. "Why," said he, "did not you come directly to my house? I wonder you would go to lodge in an inn. What need was there of ceremony between us two?" "Sir," said Moralez, taking upon himself to speak for me, "my master hates to be rude. Besides, he is very excusable for not caring to be seen by you in the condition he is in at present. We were robbed by the way. All our things in general were taken from us." "My man tells you nothing but the truth, Signior de Moyadas," interrupted I. "This accident was the

the reason I did not come to your house. I durst not appear in this dress before a mistress who has not yet seen me, and therefore I waited for the return of a servant whom I have sent to Calatrava." "Pugh," says the old man, "this ought not to have hindered you from lodging in my house; but I am resolved now not to go home without you."

Having said this, the old man carried me to his house; but in the way thither we talked of the pretended robbery I had met with. I told him that what grieved me most was my having lost Florentina's picture among the rest of my things. Upon this the good man said laughing, That this loss was easily repaired, and that the original was better than the copy. The moment we were come to his house, he called his daughter, who was not above sixteen, and was extremely handsome: "You see the wife," said he, "that my brother promised you." "Ah, Signior!" cried I, with a passionate air, "you need not tell me that this is the charming Florentina. That beautiful face is deeply engraved in my memory, but much more in my heart. If the picture I have lost, which was only a weak sketch of all these charms, could inflame me so violently, judge what transports I must feel now!" "This flattery is too great," said Florentina; "neither am I vain enough to imagine I deserve it." "Well, I will leave you to your compliments," interrupted the father. At the same time he left me alone with his daughter, and taking Moralez aside:

“Friend,” said he, “you have lost all your things you tell me; and your money without doubt among the rest?” “Yes, Sir,” replied my comrade, “I do not know how many banditti set upon us near Castil Blazo, and left us nothing but the cloaths upon our backs; but we shall soon receive some bills of exchange, which will put us *in statu quo*.”

“But till these letters of exchange arrive,” answered the old man, pulling out his purse, “here is an hundred pistoles for you.” “Oh! Sir,” cried Moralez, “my master will never take them. You do not know him, I find. No, no, he is very cautious in cash-affairs. He is none of your young heirs, that so they have but money, do not care how they come by it. He does not love to run in debt. He had rather beg alms than borrow a farthing.” “I am glad to hear it,” said the good man: “I like him the better. I hate to see people load themselves with debts; but your quality will do it, and so it is in vain to talk. I will not force your master in any thing against his inclinations; if, as you say, it is an affront to offer him money, let it pass.” With this he was putting up his purse into his pocket, but my companion held his arm. “Stay, Signior de Moyadas,” said he, “whatever aversion my master may have for borrowing, I do not despair to get him to accept of your hundred pistoles. He only hates to borrow of strangers. He is not so scrupulous among his own family. Nay, of his father he can beg what money he wants as well as any body.

body. He knows how to make distinctions; and you know, Sir, he is to look upon you as a second father."

By this means Morales got possession of the purse of the old man, who came back to us, and found his daughter and myself engaged in compliments. He interrupted us. He told Florentina the obligations he lay under to me, and returned me thanks in terms which shewed what a grateful sense he had of it. I caught at this opportunity; I told him that the greatest mark of acknowledgment he could shew me, was to hasten my marriage with his daughter. He yielded kindly to my impatience; and assured me that in three days at utmost I should be Florentina's husband, and that instead of the six thousand ducats he had promised for her portion, he would give me ten to let me see how deeply he was affected with the services I had done him.

Thus Morales and I were treated at the good man's house like lords, and had besides the agreeable prospect of fingering ten thousand ducats, with which we proposed to leave Merida as fast as possible. But a spice of fear disturbed this joy in some measure; we dreaded, lest before the three days were at an end, the true son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla should come and cross all our good fortune. This fear was not ill grounded. The very next day a sort of a peasant came to Moyadas's house. I was not then at home, but my comrade was. "Signior," said the peasant to the old man, "I belong to the
N 2 - gentleman

gentleman of Calatrava, who is to be your son-in-law, I mean Signior Pedro de Menbrilla. We are just now arrived. He will be here in a moment. I came before to give you notice." He had hardly done speaking when his master appeared: which very much surprised the old man, and put poor Morales to a nonplus.

Pedro was a very handsome young man. He addressed his speech to the father of Florentina: but the good man did not give him time to finish what he had begun to say: he turned to my companion, "Prithee, now," says he, "what does all this mean?" Then Morales, who could boast of as good an assurance as ever a man alive, put on a confident look, and said to the old gentleman: "Sir, these two fellows belong to the gang that unharnessed us upon the road. I know them again perfectly well, particularly him who has the impudence to call himself the son of Signior Juan Velez de la Menbrilla." The good man believed Morales, and being persuaded that these new-comers were rogues, he said to them, "Faith, Gentlemen, you are come too late: Pedro de Menbrilla is here before you. He has lodged in my house ever since yesterday." "Have a care what you say," answered the young man of Calatrava. "That Pedro who lodges in your house must be some impostor. Juan Velez de Menbrilla has no son but myself." "You may e'en march off," replied the old man, "I know well enough who you are: Do not you re-
member

member this man's face here, and have you forgot that you robbed his master?" "If it were not in your house," said Pedro, "I would punish this villain as he deserves for calling me thief. He may thank your presence for restraining my anger. Signior," continued he, "you are imposed upon, I am the young man to whom your brother Austin promised Florentina. Shall I shew you all the letters he wrote to my father about this match? Will you believe your daughter's picture which he sent me a little before he died?"

"No," interrupted the old man, "I care no more for the picture than I do for the letters; I know very well how you came by them, and therefore I advise you as a friend to be trooping from Merida as soon as possible." "This is too much," interrupted the young cavalier in his turn. "I will not tamely endure to be robbed of my good name, and treated as a highwayman. I am acquainted with some persons in this town. I will go and return with them to confound this impostor, who has given you a prejudice against me." Having said this, he and his servant retired, and Moralez remained conqueror. Nay, this accident made Jerome de Moyadas resolve to conclude the marriage that very day. He went out therefore that moment to give orders about what was necessary for that purpose.

Though my comrade was very glad to see Florentina's father so favourably disposed to

our advantage, yet he was not perfectly easy. He was apprehensive of what Pedro would do, and wished impatiently for my return, that he might inform me of what had passed. I found him very thoughtful. "What is the matter?" said I. "You seem melancholy." "And good reason I have for it," answered he. At the same time he told me all that had happened. "Now do you be judge," added he, "whether or no I have cause to be uneasy. It is your rash project has brought us into this perplexity. The enterprise, I own, was noble, and would have made your name immortal, had it succeeded; but now in all appearance it will have a very queer catastrophe; and to prevent any further confusion, I think we cannot do better than pack up our awls and be gone with the feather which we have plucked out of the old man's wing already."

"Monsieur Moralez," replied I, "you are very soon disheartened. You are no manner of credit to Don Matthias de Cordel, and the other cavaliers with whom you lived at Toledo. When one has served a apprenticeship under such famous masters, one ought not to be so easily alarmed. As for me who intend to follow the steps of those heroes, and shew myself a worthy disciple, the obstacle which you are so terrified at, makes me only the more resolute; and I am fully determined to remove it." "If you do that," said my companion, "I will set you above all the great men in Plutarch."

Just

Just as Moralez had done speaking, entered Jerome de Moyadas. "You shall be my son-in-law this very night," said he; "your man I suppose has told you what has happened. Are not you amazed at the rogue's impudence, to think to persuade me he was the son of my brother's correspondent?" "Signior," replied I in a dejected tone, and with the most ingenuous air I could possibly put on, "I find I am not capable of carrying on a piece of treachery. I am resolved to confess all to you. I am not the son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla." "What do I hear?" interrupted the old man very much surprised: "What, are not you the young man to whom my brother gave a ————" "I beg, Sir, you would hear me out," interrupted I in my turn. "I have been eight days in love with your daughter; which has kept me at Merida. Yesterday, after having saved your life, I was just about to ask her of you in marriage, when you stopped my mouth by telling me, you had promised her to another. You told me that your brother upon his deathbed conjured you to give her to Pedro de la Menbrilla, that you had promised you would, and that your word was your bond. This, I own, made me despair of all success: but love inspired me with the stratagem which I made use of. It is true, I could not without uneasiness impose thus upon you; but I hoped you would forgive me when I discovered to you the whole matter of fact, and informed you moreover, that I am an Italian prince travelling

velling *incognite*. My father is sovereign of certain valleys that lie between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy. I imagined you would be agreeably surprised when I revealed my birth to you, and I meant to keep it in reserve as a particular pleasure to declare it to Florentina after I had married her. But heaven," continued I in another tone, "would not suffer me to be so happy. Pedro de la Menbrilla appears. I must now restore him his name, let the restitution make me never so miserable. Your promise binds you to make him your son-in-law; you are obliged to prefer him to me, without having any regard to my quality, or compassion of the torments you will thereby give me. I will not suggest to you that your brother was only your daughter's uncle; that you are her father, and that it is more just you should acquit yourself of the obligation you have to me, than be so nicely scrupulous in keeping a verbal engagement, which is but a very weak tie upon your will."

"More just!" cried Jerome de Moyadas; "ay, a thousand times, I shall hardly be long a-chusing between you and Pedro de la Menbrilla. If my brother Austin himself were alive, I am sure he would not be at all displeased at my giving the preference to one who has saved my life, and who, though a prince, does not disdain my alliance. I must be my own enemy, a mere fool, if I did not give you my daughter, nay, press you to take her." "Yet, Signior," replied I, "do nothing hastily, I
would

would have you consult your own interest, and notwithstanding the nobleness of my birth —” “You jest sure,” interrupted he: “ought I to hesitate a moment? No, my prince; I beg you would honour the happy Florentina with your hand this very night.” “Well then,” said I, “be it so; do you yourself go carry her the news, and let her know her glorious destiny.”

While the good man ran to tell his daughter that she had conquered a prince, Moralez, who had been by in all this conversation, fell upon his knees before me, and said: “Monsieur the Italian Prince, son of the Sovereign of the valleys which lie between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy, give me leave to throw myself at your Highness’s feet as a testimony of my amazement. Upon the word of a sharper I think you a prodigy. I used to believe myself the top of my profession; but I own I must strike to you, though you have less experience than myself.” “Your fears are dispelled then. Are they?” said I. “Quite and clean,” answered he, “I do not now care a pin for Signior Pedro. Let him come as soon as he will.” Thus Moralez and I thought ourselves tight in our stirrups. We began to lay out the course we should take with the portion, of which we imagined ourselves as secure as if it had been in our pockets. But alas! it was not yet come to that, and the end of this adventure did not answer our expectations.

The young gentleman of Calatrava soon returned. He brought with him two citizens,
and

and an alguazil as venerable for his mustachios and the blackness of his beard, as for the dignity of his office. Florentina's father was with us. "Signior de Moyadas," says Pedro, "I have prevailed upon these three honest gentlemen to come along with me: they know me, and can tell you who I am." "Ay that we can," cried the alguazil. "I do hereby certify to all the world that I know you. Your name is *Pedro*, and you are the only son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla. Whoever dares maintain the contrary, is an impostor." "I believe you, Signior Alguazil," says Jerome de Moyadas. "I do not at all doubt your testimony, nor that of those gentlemen who are with you. I am fully convinced that the young cavalier who has brought you hither is the only son of my brother's correspondent. But what is all that to the purpose? I have at present altered my resolution of giving him my daughter."

"Oh, that is another case," says the alguazil. "All I come for, is to tell you that I know this young gentleman. You are master of your own daughter, and nobody can force you to dispose of her contrary to your inclinations." "Neither will I pretend to it," interrupted Pedro. "But Signior de Moyadas will give me leave to ask him, why he has changed his mind? Has he any thing to object against me? Since I must give up the pleasing hopes of being his son-in-law, at least I shall be glad to hear that I have not lost them by any fault of mine." "I have nothing

nothing to object against you," replied the old man; nay, which is more, I am extremely sorry that I am forced to break my word with you; and beg you would forgive me. I dare say you have too much generosity in you to take it ill that I should prefer to you a rival who has saved my life. This is the gentleman," said he, pointing to me, "who did me that good office; and for my further excuse know, he is an Italian prince.

These last words struck Pedro dumb. The two citizens began to open their eyes and stare: but the alguazil, always accustomed to take things by the worst handle, suspected this wonderful adventure to be some cheat that might make work for him. He viewed me very attentively; and as my features, which he was unacquainted with, frustrated his good intentions, he fell to examine the face of my companion: unluckily for my Highness, he knew Moralez, and remembering to have seen him in the prisons of Ciudad Real; "Ha, ha," cried he, "here is a job for me. This gentleman I am perfectly well acquainted with, and let me tell you, he is one of the completest sharpers in all the kingdoms and principalities of Spain." "Not too fast, good Mr Alguazil," says Jerome de Moyadas; "this man whom you paint in such coarse colours, is a servant of the Prince's." "Very well," replied the alguazil. "That is what I intend to steer my course by. I judge of the master by the man. I don't doubt but these sparks are a couple of tricksters

sters that have joined their forces to impose upon you. I am not often deceived in these affairs : and to shew that these wags are what I tell you, I will carry them away to prison this moment. They shall have a little talk with Signior Corregidor ; and afterwards a few jerks to inculcate what instructions he may give them." " Hold, hold," cried the old man. " Don't let us outrun our discretion. You officers of justice, don't care what you do, nor whom you abuse. Pray may not the servant be a knave without the master's being one too ? Is it any thing extraordinary to see a rogue in the service of a prince ?" " I think the man is mad, with his princes," interrupted the alguazil. " This fellow I dare swear is a sharper, and I arrest him in the king's name, and his comrade too. I have twenty serjeants at the door that shall drag them to prison if they don't go along with me quietly. Come, will your Highness troop ?"

At these words our hearts sunk almost into our breeches, and this our confusion made Jerome begin to suspect us, or rather entirely convinced him what we were. He then believed that our design was to trick him. However, he behaved himself very generously upon this occasion : " Mr Alguazil," says he, " your suspicions may yet be false ; though perhaps they are but too true. Be that as it will, let us search this matter no further. Let these two young men go about their business. I beg you would not deny me this request, and thus I shall repay the obligation

gation I lie under to them." "If I did my duty," answered the alguazil, "I should put these gentlemen in prison without giving any heed to what you say : but for your sake I will stretch my duty a little, upon condition they leave the town this moment ; for if I find them here to-morrow, I know what I know."

When Moralez and I heard we were free, we began to take heart a little. We would have spoke boldly, and averred that we were men of honour ; but the alguazil looked upon us askew, and struck us dumb. It is strange what an ascendant those people have over us. We were forced therefore to give up Florentina and her portion to Pedro de la Menbrilla, who without doubt became the son-in-law of Jerome de Moyadas. I retired with my comrade. We took our way to Truxilla, with the consolation, however, of having got a hundred pistoles by this business. An hour before night we were going by a little village, designing to take up our lodging in some town beyond. We spied an inn of a very good appearance for such a place as that. The host and hostess were sitting at the door upon long st. nes. The host, an old fat fellow, was fumbling upon a sorry guitar to divert his wife, who seemed to hearken to his music with pleasure. "Gentlemen," cried the host when he saw that we passed by his house, "I advise you to stop where you are. It is three long murdering leagues to the very next village, and I can tell you, you will not be half so well accommodated there as in my

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house. Be advised and come in. You shall be well used, and cheap enough. We were persuaded to do so. We went up to the host and hostess; we saluted them, and sitting down by them, began all four of us to talk of things indifferent. The host said he was an officer of the holy brotherhood, and the hostess was a fat merry woman, and knew how to make the best of her market.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of twelve or fifteen cavaliers mounted some upon mules and some upon horses, and followed by a matter of thirty mules laden with packs. "A brave troop, my lads," cried the host at the sight of so many people! "Where shall I put them all?" In an instant the village was filled with men and beasts. By good luck there was near the inn a vast barn, in which they put the pack-mules. The mules and horses of the cavaliers were crouded into other places. As for the men, they did not take so much care about getting beds, as what supper they should have. The host, hostess, and a young maid of theirs went to work about it tightly. They fell without mercy upon all the poultry in the yard. This with some fricassée of rabbits and cats, and a whole sea of soup made of mutton and cabbage, furnished victuals enough for the whole company.

Moralez and I looked at these cavaliers, who now and then gave us too a view. At last we fell into conversation, and we told them that if they pleased we would sup with them.

them. They answered that they would take it kindly. Down therefore we sat. One there was among them that gave orders, and to whom the others, though they all seemed to be very free, shewed some deference. This man indeed carried it above them all. He talked loud. He sometimes contradicted the opinions of the rest, who, far from returning it, seemed to have respect for what he said. The discourse happened to fall upon Andalusia; and as Moralez praised Seville, the man I just now spoke of, said to him: "Signior Cavalier, I was born in the very town you commend, at least in the neighbourhood of it, for the borough de Moyrena is the place of my nativity." "And of mine too," answered my companion. "I am also of Moyrena, and I am sure then your parents cannot be unknown to me. Whose son are you?" "The son of an honest notary," replied the cavalier; "his name is *Martin Moralez*." "Faith, odd enough!" cried my comrade in some surprize. "You are then my elder brother Manuel Moralez?" "The same," said the other; "and I suppose you are my little brother Lewis, whom I left in the cradle when I went from my father's house?" "Right," quoth my comrade. At these words they both rose from table, and embraced one another over and over. Afterwards Signior Manuel said to the company: "Gentlemen, this accident is a perfect miracle! chance throws in my way a brother whom I have not seen these twenty years. Let me

present him to you. Then all the cavaliers, who out of civility were standing, saluted young Moralez, and almost choked him with embraces. After this, we sat down again to table, where we continued all night, without going to bed. The two brothers sat next to one another, and talked to themselves of their family, while all the rest pushed about the glass and made merry.

Lewis had a great deal of talk with Manuel, and afterwards taking me aside he said to me: "All those cavaliers are servants to the Count de Montanos, whom the King has lately appointed viceroy of Majorca. They are conveying the viceroy's equipage to Alicant, where they are to take shipping. My brother, who has attained to be that nobleman's steward, has offered to take me along with him, and upon my being unwilling to leave you, he told me that if you would go with me, he would take care to get you some good employment." "My dear friend," continued he, "I would not have you despise this opportunity. Let us go to the island of Majorca together. If we like the place, we will stay there; if not, we can return to Spain, and be just where we were."

I readily agreed to the proposal. Young Moralez and myself put ourselves into the list of the Count's officers, and we set out with him from the inn before the sun was up. We came by long stages to the city of Alicant, where I bought a guitar, and made up a very handsome suit of cloaths, before we embarked.

ed. My thoughts ran upon nothing but the island of Majorca, and Lewis Moralez was as much tickled with it as myself. We now seemed to have renounced all manner of sharpening. To speak the truth, we were willing to keep our credit among these cavaliers, and that put a constraint upon the natural bent of our genius. At length we went joyfully on shipboard, and flattered ourselves that we should be soon at Majorca; but we were hardly got out of the gulf of Alicant, when a dreadful storm arose all of a sudden. I have here a rare opportunity to make a florid description of a tempest; to paint the air all on fire; to make the thunder grumble, the winds rattle, the waves roar, and so forth: but skipping over all those flowers of rhetoric, I shall only tell you that the storm was violent, and obliged us to cast anchor at the island de la Cabrera. It is a small island strengthened with a little fortress, which was then garrisoned by five or six soldiers and an officer who gave us a very civil reception.

As we were to spend some days here to mend our sails and tackle, we used several sorts of recreations to pass away the time. Every one followed his own inclinations: some played at primero, and others amused themselves other ways; I for my part used to walk about in the island with those among our cavaliers that loved walking. We jumped from rock to rock, for the ground was very uneven, hardly any thing but stones to be seen, and very little earth in it. One day, as

we were viewing this dismal place, and reflecting upon the caprice of nature, who shews herself fruitful or barren when she pleases, our smelling faculty was all of a sudden seized with a very agreeable odour. We turned towards the east, from whence this odour came, and were surprised to see in the middle of some rocks, a large spot of earth covered with fine grass, and perfumed with honeysuckles more beautiful and sweet even than those which grow in Andalusia: We immediately directed our steps to those charming bushes which perfumed the air all around, and we found they grew about the mouth of a very deep cave. This cave was broad, and not very dark. We went down to the very bottom of it by stone steps, which at each end were adorned with flowers, and which formed a sort of natural stair-case. When we were below, we saw serpentising, upon a sand more yellow than gold, several little streams produced by the drops of water which the rocks incessantly distilled into the cave, and which lost themselves in the ground. The water looked so clear, that we drank of it, and found it so fresh that we resolved to come thither again next day, and to bring with us some bottles of wine, being persuaded that we should drink them with abundance of pleasure in so charming a retreat.

We could not leave this agreeable place without reluctance, and when we were come back to the fort, we did not fail to boast to our companions of our discovery; but the captain

captain of the fort told us, that he would advise us as a friend, to go no more to the cave we were so delighted with. "Why so?" said I, "is there any danger in it?" "A great deal," replied he. "The corsairs of Algier and Tripoly do often land in this island, and go to that spring to take in fresh water. They one day surpris'd two soldiers of my garrison in that place, and made them slaves." The officer, though he spoke very seriously, could not make us believe him. We thought he did but jest, and so the very next day I returned to the cave with three of the cavaliers. We went without the least fire-arm, to let them see we feared nothing. Young Moralez did not care to go with us; but chose to stay with his brother in the fort.

We went down to the bottom of the cave, as we had done before, and cooled some bottles of wine, which we had brought with us, in the spring. While we were drinking deliciously, playing upon the guitar, and conversing jovially, we saw at the mouth of the cave, several men with thick mustachios, Turkish dresses, and turbants. We fancied that some of our companions, and the captain of the fort, had disguised themselves in that manner to frighten us. In this thought we fell a-laughing at them, and suffered ten of them to come down, without thinking of defending ourselves. We were soon undeceived to our sorrow. We found we were fallen into the clutches of a pirate, who came with his men to seize us: "Yield, dogs," cried he to us,
in

in the Castilian language, "or you die this moment." With that they clapt their carabines to our breasts, and we would have been exposed to a good volley, if we had made the least resistance. We chose slavery rather than death. We gave our swords to the corsair, who loaded us with chains, and carried us to his ship, which was not far off. Then hoisting sail, we steered towards Algier.

Thus were we punished for not taking the advice the captain of the garrison gave us. The first thing the pirate did was to search our pockets, and ease us of our money. A rare windfall for him! The two hundred pistoles of the young cits of Placentia, the hundred which Moralez had received of Jerome de Moyadas, and which I unluckily had about me; all this went at one sweep. My companions too had their pockets very well lined. In short, it was a plentiful harvest for the pirate, who was overjoyed at his good luck; and the brute, not contented to take our dear money from us, insulted us with raileries, which would not have been very biting, but for the necessity we lay under of enduring them. After a thousand pitiful jokes, he called for the bottles of wine we had cooled in the fountain, and which his men had been very careful to bring into captivity with us. He began to empty them with his sailors, and drank to our healths by way of derision.

My companions all this while looked with countenances that shewed their vexation and sorrow.

sorrow. They were the more mortified with their slavery, because they had entertained delicious hopes of going to the island of Majorca, where they thought they should live like princes. For my part, I had so much firmness as to take my resolution at once, and therefore I began to talk with the waggish corsair. I jested with him with a very unconcerned air: he liked this. "Young man," said he, "I love people of your temper. And in the main, it is better to arm one's self with patience, and fall in with the times, than stand fighting and groaning, which will do no good. Come, play us a little tune," continued he, observing that I had a guitar with me. "Let us hear what a master you are." I obeyed the moment he had ordered me to be untied, and began to strike my guitar in such a manner as won me his applause. Indeed, I had learned of the best master in all Madrid, and played tolerably well on that instrument. I sung him an air too, and he was equally pleased with my voice. All the Turks in the ship, by their gesture, shewed the delight I gave them; by which I found they had no great skill in music. The pirate told me in my ear that I should be no unhappy slave, and that I might be sure my talents would procure me an employment that would make my captivity very supportable.

These words gave me some little comfort; but yet I could not help being a little uneasy at seeing myself in so pitiful a condition as to want

want such an employment. When we arrived at the port of Algier, we found a great number of people gathered together to receive us; and we were no sooner landed, than they raised a thousand shouts for joy. Add to this, that the air resounded with the confused noise of trumpets, Morisco flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which formed but an odd kind of concert. The cause of all this rejoicing was a false report that had been spread in the city. The people had been informed that the *Renegade Mehemet*, which was the name of our pirate, had been killed in the attack of a great Genoese ship; so that all his friends, when they heard of his return, strove who should receive him with the most joy.

I was carried with all my companions to the palace of the Bashaw Solyman, where a Christian scribe examining us apart, asked us our names, our ages, our country, our religion, and what we could do. Then Mehemet, shewing me to the Bashaw, cried up my voice to the skies, and told him, that I played upon the guitar to a miracle. This was enough to make Solyman chuse me for his service. I remained therefore in his seraglio. The other captives were carried to a public market, and sold according to custom. What Mehemet had foretold to me in the ship, did really come to pass. I lived happily. I was not delivered over to the keepers of the prisons, nor put to any hard labour. Solyman Bashaw caused me to be put into a particular place with
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five or six slaves of quality, who were to be speedily ransomed, and who were employed in very easy work. My business was to water the orange-trees and flowers in the garden. I could not have had a more gentle task.

Solyman was about forty years old, handsome enough, and very polite for a Turk. His favourite mistress was a Cachemirian woman, who had gained an absolute power over him by her wit and beauty. He loved her to idolatry. He every day gave her some diversion or other; at one time a concert of voices and instruments, and at another a play, after the Turkish manner; that is, dramatic poems, wherein the rules of modesty and decency are no more regarded, than those of Aristotle. The favourite, whose name was *Farrukhnaz*, loved these shows passionately; so much, that sometimes she made her own women act Arabian pieces before the Bashaw. She herself would play a part in them, and charm all the spectators by the gracefulness and life with which she performed them. One day when I was among the musicians in one of these representations, Solyman ordered me to play upon my guitar, and sing alone in an interlude. I had the happiness to please. Every body applauded me, and the favourite, as I thought, regarded me with no unkind eye.

The next day, as I was watering my orange-trees in the garden, there passed by me an eunuch, who, without stopping to say any thing to me, dropt a note at my feet. I took
it

it up in a confusion mixed with hope and fear. I laid myself flat upon the ground, for fear of being seen from the windows of the seraglio, and hiding myself behind some orange-pots, opened the note. I found in it a diamond of a considerable value, and these words in good Spanish: "Young Christian, return thanks to Heaven-for thy captivity. Love and fortune will make it happy; love, if thou canst be moved with the charms of a handsome lady; and fortune, if thou hast courage enough to despise all sorts of dangers."

I did not doubt in the least that the letter came from the favourite sultana; the style and the diamond convinced me that it must be so. Besides that I am not naturally inclined to be timorous, the vanity of having an affair with the mistress of so great a man, and above all, the hopes of getting four times as much money from her as was necessary to pay for my ransom, made me resolve to try this adventure, let the dangers that stood in the way be what they would. I went on with my work, studying how I should get into Far-rukhnaz's apartment, or rather waiting till she herself should direct me; for I rightly imagined that she would not stop there, but be herself the contriver of our meeting. I was not deceived. The same eunuch that had passed by me returned an hour afterwards: "Christian," says he, "have you considered, and shall you be bold enough to follow me?" I answered, "Yes." "Well then," replied

plied he, "Heaven preserve you. You shall see me again to-morrow morning." Having said this, he retired. I accordingly saw him again about eight o'clock next morning. He beckoned to me to come to him. I went, and he led me into a hall where there was a great long roll of cloth, which another eunuch and himself had just brought thither, and which they were to carry to the sultana's apartment to serve for the decoration of an Arabian play, which she was then preparing for the Dey.

The two eunuchs unrolled the cloth, made me lie down in it at my full length, and then, to the evident hazard of stifling me, rolled it up again with me in it. Afterwards taking each of them an end, they brought me safe into the chamber, where lay the beautiful Cachemirian. She was alone with an old slave devoted to her pleasure. They two unrolled the cloth; and Farrukhnaz shewed such transports of joy at the sight of me, as discovered the temper of the women of her country. Bold as I was, I could not see myself thus suddenly transported into the secret apartment of the women, without some little terrour. The lady took notice of it, and to dissipate it; "Young man," said she, "fear nothing. Solyman is just now gone to his country-house. He will be there all this day. We may converse together here in safety."

These words gave me courage, and made me put on a countenance which redoubled the joy of the favourite. "You have pleased

me," said she, "and I intend to soften the rigour of your slavery. I believe you worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you. Though you are in the habit of a slave, yet you have a greatness in your looks which makes me believe you are no mean person. Speak freely. Tell me who you are. I very well know that prisoners of quality disguise it as much as they can, that their ransom may be the easier; but you need not use that caution with me: nay, it would very much offend me, since I promise you your freedom. Be sincere therefore, and confess to me you are nobly born." "Indeed, Madam," replied I, "it would be ungrateful to repay your goodness with dissimulation. Since you absolutely command me to tell you my quality, you must be obeyed. I am the son of a grandee of Spain." I do not know but I told truth. At least the sultana believed me, and rejoicing that she had pitched her choice upon so worthy a cavalier, she assured me that it should not be her fault if we did not see one another often in private. We had a great deal of conversation together. I never met with a woman more amusing. She understood several languages, particularly Spanish, which she talked tolerably well. When she judged it time to part, I was put by her order into a great osier-basket covered by a piece of embroidered silk wrought with her own hands. Then the two slaves that had brought me in were called, and they carried me back again as a present from the favourite

to the Dey ; which made it sacred against all the men appointed to guard the women.

Farrukhnaz and I found other means of seeing one another ; and that amiable captive did by degrees inspire me with as much love for her as she herself had for me. Our intelligence was secret during two months, though it is no common thing for the mysteries of love to be kept long from the eyes of the Argusses which are in a seraglio. But an unlucky accident overthrew all our happiness, and my fortune altered its face entirely. One day when I had been brought into the sultana's apartment, in the body of an artificial dragon designed for one of our plays, while I was conversing with her, Solyman, whom I thought employed out of town, surprised us. He came so suddenly into his favourite's chamber, that the old woman had hardly time enough to tell us of his arrival, and much less time had I to hide myself. Thus I was the first thing the Dey cast his eyes upon.

He was very much amazed to see me, and his eyes were immediately red with fury. I looked upon myself as a man on the brink of destruction, and imagined my tortures were already begun. As for Farrukhnaz, I perceived indeed, that she was surprised ; but instead of owning her crime and begging pardon, she said to Solyman : “ My Lord, before you pronounce sentence upon me, be pleased to hear me. Appearances indeed condemn me, and any body would think I have

committed such a treachery against you as deserves the severest punishment. I have had this young slave in my apartment, and to bring him hither employed all the contrivances and stratagems I should have used if I had been violently in love with him. Nevertheless, I attest our mighty prophet, that, notwithstanding all this, I am not faithless to you. I had a mind to talk with this Christian slave to convert him from the errors of his sect, and bring him over to that of the faithful. I found in him all the opposition I expected; yet at length I have overcome all his prejudices, and he has made me a promise to embrace the Mahometan religion."

I own I ought to have contradicted the favourite, without any regard to the apparent danger I was in: but my senses were all so distracted, and I was so terrified at the death which threatened both myself and the woman I loved, that I remained confounded, and was not able to utter a word. The Dey, persuaded by my silence that his mistress told him nothing but what was true, was immediately appeased. "Madam," replied he, "I am willing to believe that you have not dishonoured me, and that the desire of performing a deed so agreeable to our prophet engaged you in this nice affair. I excuse your imprudence therefore, provided this captive take the turban this moment." Immediately he called for a Marabou. They dressed me in a Turkish habit. I did what they would, without having the least power to oppose it. Or,

to speak better, I did not know what I did in the disorder I was in. How many Christians would have been as weak as myself upon such an occasion?

After the ceremony, I went out of the seraglio, with the name of *Sidy Hally*, to exercise a little employment which Solyman gave me. I never saw the sultana afterwards: but one day an eunuch of hers came to me. He brought me jewels to the value of two thousand sultanines of gold, with a letter, wherein she assured me that she should never forget the generous complaisance I shewed in turning Mahometan to save her life. And indeed, besides the presents I received from Farrukhnaz, I obtained by her means an employment more considerable than the former, and in less than seven years time I grew one of the richest renegadoes in Algiers.

You will easily imagine, that if I assisted at the prayers which the Mussulmen make in their mosques, and did the other duties of their religion, it was nothing in me but grimace. I kept a firm resolution of entering again into the bosom of the church; and for that purpose I intended as soon as possible to get over into Spain or Italy with the wealth I had amassed. In the mean while I lived very agreeably. I had a fine house, pleasant gardens, a great number of slaves, and very handsome women in my seraglio. Though the Mahometans are forbid the use of wine, yet most of them will take the liberty to drink it in secret. For my part, I drank it

without any fear or precaution, as all the renegadoes do. I remember two pot-companions, with whom I often passed away a night very merrily. One was a Jew and the other an Arabian. I took them for good honest fellows, and therefore was not under the least constraint in their company. One night I invited them to sup with me: a dog of mine which I loved passionately, happened to die that very day; we washed his body, and interred it with all the ceremonies used in the funerals of the Mahometans. We did not do this to ridicule the Mussulman religion, but only for a frolic, and to satisfy a foolish whim, which took us in our cups to pay the last duties to my dog.

This action had like to have ruined me. The next day there came a man, who said to me, "Signior Sidy Hally, an important affair brings me to you. His Lordship the Cady would speak with you. Pray take the pains to come to him immediately. An Arabian merchant who supped with you last night, has informed him of a certain impiety committed by you with relation to a dog, which you buried. This is the occasion of my summoning you to appear before the judge. If you fail to appear, I give you notice that a process will be issued out against you." Having said this, he went his ways, and left me thunder-struck at his summons. The Arabian had not the least cause to complain of me, and I could not imagine why the villain had betrayed me thus. The business, however, required

red my deep attention. I knew the Cady to be a man severe in appearance, but not very scrupulous at the bottom. I put two hundred sultanines of gold into my purse, and went to the judge: he had me into his closet, and said to me with a stern countenance: "You are an impious, sacrilegious, abominable wretch. You have buried a dog like a Mussulman profane as you are! Is this the respect you have for our most holy ceremonies? and did you turn Mahometan only to make a jest of our practices of devotion?" "My Lord," replied I, "the Arabian who gave you this wrong information, that false friend, is an accomplice in my crime, if it be a crime to grant the honours of burial to a faithful servant, to a poor creature that had a thousand good qualities. He was so fond of men of worth and distinction, that even at his death he was resolved to give them proofs of his friendship. He leaves them all his wealth by a will which he made, and of which I am executor. To one he bequeaths twenty crowns, to another thirty, and he has not forgot your Lordship," continued I, pulling out my purse; "here are two hundred sultanines of gold which he charged me to give you into your own hands." The Cady at this discourse of mine laid aside all his gravity. He could not help laughing for the life of him; and as we were alone, he took the purse without any more to do, and sent me away, saying; "Go, Signior Sidy Hally, you did very well in interring with pomp and honour

nour a dog that had so great respect for persons of merit."

By this means I got rid of this ugly business, and if it did not make me wiser, at least it made me more cautious. I drank no more with the Arabian, nor even with the Jew. I chose for my companion a young gentleman of Leghorn, who was my slave. His name was *Azarini*. I was not like the other renegades who impose more hardships upon their Christian slaves than the Turks themselves do. All mine waited very patiently for their ransom. And indeed, I used them so kindly, that they themselves told me they were more apprehensive of changing their master than continuing in slavery, notwithstanding the charms there are in liberty.

One day the Dey's ships came in with some considerable prizes. They brought above a hundred slaves of both sexes which they had taken upon the coasts of Spain. Solymán kept but a very small number for himself, and the rest were sold. I went to the place of sale, and bought a Spanish girl between ten and twelve years of age. She wept and took on at a violent rate. I was surprised to see one so young, and yet so afflicted at her captivity. I spoke to her in Spanish to moderate her affliction, and assured her she was fallen into the hands of a master who was not without humanity, though he wore a turban. The little hussy was so full of her grief that she did not mind me. She did nothing but sigh and sob, and now and then cried out :

out: "Oh mother, why are we parted? I should be contented if we were but together." In saying these words she turned her eyes upon a woman between forty and fifty, who stood at some little distance off, and who with her eyes fixed upon the ground waited in silence till somebody purchased her. I asked the girl, if the person she looked at were her mother? "Alas! yes, Sir," answered she, "for God's sake do not let her be taken from me." "Well! child," said I, "if your being together will give you comfort, you shall soon be satisfied." At the same time I approached the mother to bargain for her; but I had no sooner looked upon her face, than with the utmost emotion I beheld the features, the very features of Lucinda. "Just Heaven!" said I to myself; "it is my mother! I remember her perfectly." For her part, whether her misfortunes made every body about her seem her foes, or whether my dress disguised me, or that I was really altered in the twelve years that I had been absent from her, she did not know me again. After having bought her too, I carried her with her daughter to my house.

There it was that I meant to surprise her with informing her who I was: "Madam," said I to Lucinda, "is it possible you should have no remembrance of my face? Can a mustachio and a turban make you forget your own son Raphael?" At these words my mother started up, viewed me attentively, knew me again, and we tenderly embraced each other.

ther. Afterwards I embraced her daughter, who perhaps no more knew she had a brother, than I did that I had a sister. "What say you?" said I to my mother, "can all your plays shew a meeting between two friends so true and natural as this?" "Son," replied she sighing, "I at first rejoiced to see you; but my joy is turned into sorrow. In what a condition; alas! do I find you? My slavery gives me a thousand times less uneasiness than the odious habit——" "Heyday," interrupted I laughing, "this is fine i'faith! Who would have looked for this conscientiousness in an actress? You are altered indeed, mother, if my metamorphosis is so extremely offensive to you. Instead of being shocked at my turban, look upon me as an actor that plays a Turkish part. Though I am a renegade, yet I am no more a Mussulman than I was in Spain; I am as strict an adherent to Christianity as ever. When you know all the adventures that have happened to me in this country, you will excuse me. Love is the cause of my apostasy. I am a sacrificer to that little god. I take that from you." "There is another reason," add I, "why you should not be so much concerned at seeing me in this dress. You expected to have endured a rigorous captivity, and instead of that have met, in the person of your master, a son who is full of tenderness and respect, and who is rich enough to maintain you here in ease and plenty, till an occasion offers of returning into Spain with safety. You ought
to

to confess the truth of the proverb, which says, "It is an ill wind blows nobody good."

"My son," answered Lucinda, "since you intend to return again into your country, and there to abjure Mahometanism, I am satisfied." "Thank Heaven," continued she, "I may then carry back to Castile your little sister Beatrice, safe and sound as I brought her away." "Yes, Madam," said I, "you may so. We will all three of us, as soon as possible, go home to the rest of our family; for I suppose you have other tokens of your fruitfulness left in Spain?" "No," replied my mother, "I have no other children besides you two; and Beatrice, I would have you to know, is the fruit of a lawful marriage." "Ah!" cried I, "why did you give my little sister that advantage over me? How could you endure the thoughts of marriage? I have in my infancy heard you say a thousand times, that for a handsome woman to take a husband is unpardonable." "That was a great many years ago," answered she; "I have since altered my mind; even men, let their resolutions be never so firm, are apt to change them: and how then can you think a weak woman should be immoveable in hers? I will tell you the history of my life," continued she, "since the time that you left Madrid." Then she made me the following relation, which I shall never forget. I will not deprive you of the pleasure of hearing so curious a story.

"If you remember right," said my mother,
"it

“ it is almost thirteen years since you quitted young Leganez. About that time the Duke de Medina Celi told me he would sup with me in private some evening or other. He set the day. I waited for him. He came and liked me. He desired I would for his sake turn off all his rivals. I granted him his request, hoping he would pay me well for it. He did so. The very next day I received presents from him, which were afterwards followed by a great many others. I feared I should not be able to hold long in my chains a man of his quality; and I was the more apprehensive, because I knew he had escaped from several famous beauties, who lost him almost as soon as they had him. Yet the pleasure he took in my complaisantness was so far from decreasing, that he seemed to be more and more delighted with me every day. In short, I hit upon the art of amusing him, and hindering his heart, which was naturally wavering and inconstant, from giving the reins to its inclinations.

He had now loved me three months, and I had reason to flatter myself that his passion would be of long continuance, when a gentlewoman of my acquaintance, and myself, went to a concert of music where he happened to be with his dukes. We chanced to place ourselves pretty near her Ladyship, who took it in her head to be offended at my daring to appear in the place where she was. She sent one of her women to bid me go out that moment. I gave her messenger a rough answer.

The

The Duchess was so provoked that she complained to her husband, who came himself and said to me: "Lucinda, go out: when a nobleman condescends to converse with such a creature as you are, she ought not therefore to forget herself. If we love you more than our wives, at least we honour our wives more than you; and as often as you have the insolence to set yourselves up against them, you will always have the confusion to be treated with contempt."

By good luck the Duke made me this shocking speech in so low a voice, that nobody else heard it. I retired with the utmost shame, and cried for madness at having been so dreadfully mortified. To add to my vexation, the players got notice of this affair that very night. One would think those people had a demon among them that takes delight in telling the one what happens to the other. Has an actor, for example, committed some extravagancy in a debauch; or an actress had a quarrel with her gallant? All the company were immediately informed of it. All the actors therefore knew what had happened at the concert, and I will leave you to judge how free they were in laughing at my cost. There reigns among them a spirit of charity which is sure to manifest itself upon such occasions. But I despised all they could say, and comforted myself as well as I could for the loss of the Duke de Medina Celi, who never visited me again, and I was informed

shortly after that he was fallen into the snares of a nymph of the opera.

When an actress is so happy as to be in vogue, she cannot want for sparks; and the love of a nobleman, though it last but three days, adds hugely to her value. I was presently besieged with gallants, when it was known in Madrid that the Duke had quitted me. The rivals I had sacrificed to him, were now more taken with my charms than before, and returned to my chains in whole crouds: I received the homage of a thousand other hearts. I was never so much in fashion. Of all the men that put in for my favours, none seemed so zealous as a lusty German belonging to the Duke of Ossuna. He was no very fine gentleman indeed; but he won me by a thousand pistoles, which he had scraped up in his master's service, and of which he was wondrous generous, to gain the honour of being in the list of my fortunate lovers. This Adonis's name was *Brutendorf*. As long as his money lasted, I gave him the best welcome I was able; but when that was gone, he found my door shut. This proceeding of mine angered him at heart. He came to me at the house in the middle of the play. I was behind the scenes. He began to upbraid me. I laughed in his face. He flew into a rage, and gave me a box on the ear, like a true German as he was. I set up a loud cry. The play was interrupted. I came upon the stage, and addressing myself to the Duke of Ossuna, who happened to be there that night with his duchess.

chefs. I demanded satisfaction for the High-Dutch usage his gentleman had given me. The Duke ordered the play to go on, and said he would hear both parties, when it was done. The play concluded. I came before the Duke, and told him my grievances in a very passionate manner. As for the German, he used but two words in his defence. He said, that instead of repenting of what he had done, if it were to do again, he would do it. The Duke of Ossuna, having heard us both, said to the German: "Brutandorf, I discharge you my house, and forbid you appearing before me any more; not for having given this actress a box on the ear, but for having been disrespectful to your master and mistress, and putting a stop to the play in their presence."

This sentence vexed me heartily. I was very much provoked that the German should not be turned away for the affront he had given me. I imagined that such a crime against an actress ought to have been as severely punished as high treason; but this disagreeable event undeceived me, and convinced me that the world makes a great deal of distinction between the actors and the parts they play. This gave me a disgust to the stage. I resolved to leave it, and go spend the rest of my days at a distance from Madrid. I chose the city of Valencia for the place of my retreat, and thither I went *incog.* with the value of twenty thousand ducats in money and jewels which I thought more than enough to maintain me the rest of my days, since I designed to live a re-

tired life. I hired a little house at Valencia, and took a woman and a page, who knew no more of me than the rest of my neighbours. I gave myself out for the widow of one of the King's servants, and pretended to have pitched upon Valencia for the place of my residence, because it had the character of being one of the pleasantest countries in all Spain. I contracted but very few acquaintance, and observed so regular a conduct, that nobody ever suspected me to have been a player. But, notwithstanding my desire of being private, I drew upon myself the eyes of a cavalier, who had a country-house near Paterna. He was a very handsome gentleman, between thirty and forty years old: but, for all his nobility, he was very much in debt, which is not more uncommon in the kingdom of Valencia, than in a great many other countries.

This Signior Hidalgo, finding my person agreeable enough, was willing to know if I was fit for his turn as to my fortune. He sent his spies out upon the hunt, and had the pleasure to be informed by them, that with a tolerable face I was in very flowing circumstances. Overjoyed with this account of me, he soon afterwards sent me a good old woman, who told me, that being as much charmed with my virtue as my beauty, he made me a tender of his faith, and that he was ready to lead me to the altar, if I would accept of him for a husband. I asked three days time to consider of it. I inquired about the gentleman, and the good character I heard of him, though

I found his affairs were but in a pitiful posture, made me soon resolve to marry him, which I did shortly after.

Don Manuel de Xercia, which was my husband's name, carried me to his castle as soon as we were married: it had a very ancient look, of which he was excessive vain. He said it had been formerly built by one of his ancestors, and from thence concluded that there was ne'er a family in Spain more ancient than that of Xercia. But this fine title to nobility was almost destroyed by time; and the castle, which was propped up in several places, was just ready to fall. How happy it was for Don Manuel that he married me! Above half my money was spent in repairs, and the rest served to enable us to make a figure in the country. And now behold me as it were in a new world; transformed into a lady of a castle, and the greatest woman in all the parish. What a metamorphosis was here! I was too good an actress not to carry myself well in the splendour of my rank. I put on high theatrical airs, which made the poor country-folk believe me descended from some very great family. What sport would there have been among them at my expense, had they known all! The people of fashion would have thrown a thousand taunts upon me, and even the peasants have abated of the great respect they now shewed me.

I had lived very happily with Don Manuel about six years, when he died. He left me a great many intricate affairs to get through,

with your sister Beatrice, who was then four years old. The castle, which was our whole estate, was unfortunately mortgaged to several creditors, the chief of whom was called *Bernard Astuto*: and well he deserved that name! He exercised at Valencia the employment of an attorney, which he performed with great ability, having studied the law a little to be the better skilled in doing injustice. A terrible creditor! A castle in the claws of such an attorney, is like a dove in the talons of a kite. Signior Astuto, the moment he was informed of my husband's death, immediately laid siege to the castle. He had undoubtedly blown it up by the mines of chicanery he had begun to dig, if my good genius had not interposed its assistance; but fortune resolved to make the besieger my slave. I charmed him in an interview which I had with him relating to our affairs. I own I spared nothing that I thought might inspire him with love, and the desire of saving my estate made me try upon him all the airs and glances with which I had so often had success. But though I was a very great mistress of my art, yet I very much feared I should never be able to inflame an attorney. He was so muddled in his business, that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Yet this morose, this ill-natured pettifogger took more pleasure in seeing me than I could have imagined: "Madam," said he, "I do not know how to make love: I have always applied myself so diligently to my business, that I

I know nothing of the usages and customs of gallantry. Not that I am ignorant of the essential part thereof; and to come to the point, if you will have me, I will stop all further proceedings in the suit: I will disperse the creditors who have joined with me to have your estate sold. You shall enjoy the income, and the property of it shall be your daughter's." Beatrice's interest and my own would not give me leave to hesitate. I accepted the proposal. The attorney kept his word. He turned his arms against the other creditors, and secured me in the possession of my castle. This perhaps was the first time he ever served the widow and the orphan.

Thus I became the wife of an attorney; but by this new match I quite lost myself in the minds of the gentry of Valencia. The women of quality looked on me as one that had debased herself to the greatest degree, and would no longer see me. I was forced to take up with some city-ladies. This at first gave me some little uneasiness, because for above six years together I had been used to keep company with none but women of distinction: but I soon made myself easy in that point. I scraped acquaintance with the wife of a scrivener, and with those of two attorneys: their characters were very comical. There was a ridiculousness in their manners, which diverted me extremely. Their Ladyships fancied they had a thousand excellencies above the rest of their sex. "Alas!" said I to myself Sometimes when I saw their extravagancies,

extravagancies, “thus is the world! All imagine they excel their neighbours.” I used to think, that only actresses forgot themselves at this rate. But I found your city-dames were not a whit more free from vanity. I wish, for their punishment they were obliged to keep in their houses the pictures of their ancestors: faith, I hardly think they would put them in the most conspicuous part.

After four years marriage, Signior Bernard Astuto fell sick, and died without children. With the estate he left me, and what I had before, I saw myself a very rich widow. The world gave me the character of such; and upon this report a Sicilian gentleman named *Colifichini* resolved to persecute me, either till he had ruined me or married me: he left it to me to chuse. He came from Palermo to see Spain, and having satisfied his curiosity, he waited at Valencia for an opportunity of re-passing into Sicily. The cavalier was not five and twenty years old. He was well shaped, though little, and in a word his person pleased me. He found means to have a conversation with me in private, and I must needs own I grew passionately in love with him at our very first interview. The young rogue, on his side, appeared very much captivated with my charms. I believe really we should have married immediately, had not the attorney's death, who was not well warm in his grave, hindered me from contracting so soon a new engagement. But ever since I had taken a
fancy

fancy to marriages, I observed measures of decency to avoid scandal.

We agreed therefore to defer our marriage for some time. In the mean while Colifichini was very assiduous about me, and his love, instead of cooling, seemed to grow more violent every day. The poor gentleman was not overstocked with ready money. I perceived it, and took care to furnish him. Besides that I was almost twice his age, I remembered that in my youth I had exacted contributions of the men, and I looked upon what I gave now as a sort of restitution which eased my conscience. We waited as patiently as we were able, till the time of my mourning was expired. Then we went to the altar, where we bound ourselves to each other in eternal bonds. Afterwards we retired to my castle; where I may say we lived more like tender lovers than man and wife: but alas! this happiness was not to last! A pleurisy carried off my dear Colifichini."

Here I interrupted my mother. "What! Madam," said I, "your third husband die too! You are a very murdering tenement sure!" "What would you have me do, son?" replied she. "Can I prolong the days which heaven has counted? If I have lost three husbands, how could I help it? I mourned very much for two of them. He that I least lamented was the attorney. As I married him only for interest, I was easily comforted for the loss of him. But," continued she, "to return to Colifichini, some months

months after his death I had a mind to go myself to see a country-house near Palermo, which he had settled upon me for my dowry, in our marriage-contract. I embarked with my daughter to cross into Sicily; but we were taken in our way thither by the Dey of Algier's ships. We were brought to this city. You, by good fortune, happened to be in the place where we were exposed to sale. We might else have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master, who would have given us rigorous usage, and kept us perhaps in perpetual slavery, while you might have known nothing what was become of us." This was my mother's story. After which, Gentlemen, I gave her the handsomest apartment in my house, with permission to live how she thought fit; which she liked best of all. She had in the whole course of her life been so accustomed to love, that she could not possibly do without a husband or a lover. At first she cast her eyes upon some of my slaves; but Haly Pegelin, a Greek renegade that came sometimes to my house, soon attracted all her attention. She conceived more love for him than she had ever had for Colifichini; and she was so perfect a mistress of the art of pleasing men, that she found means to charm him as well as the rest. I made as if I saw nothing of their intelligence. My thoughts then were wholly employed upon my return into Spain. The Dey had given me leave to arm a ship for piracy. This took up all my time, and about

a week before I had finished it, I said to Lucinda: "Madam, we shall now leave Algier very speedily; we shall bid farewell to this abode which you detest."

My mother turned pale at these words, and stood speechless. I was strangely surprised at it. "What do I see?" cried I. "Whence can proceed the uneasiness which appears in your face? You look as if these tidings gave you affliction instead of joy. I thought it would be the highest pleasure to you to hear that I have made every thing ready for our departure. Are you then no longer fond of returning into Spain?" "No, son, I no longer desire it," replied my mother. "I have felt so much sorrow there, that I renounce it for ever." "What do I hear?" cried I, amazed: "say rather it is love which gives you an aversion to your country. How are you altered! When first you came hither, every thing you saw was odious to you: but Haly Pegelin has given you other inclinations." "I do not deny it," replied Lucinda. "I love that renegade, and will take him for my fourth husband." "What a project is this!" interrupted I with horror: "what, marry a Turk! Do you forget that you are a Christian; or rather, are you only a pretended one? Ah mother, what a project do you lay before my eyes? You are fixed upon destruction. You are about to do that voluntarily, which I did only out of necessity."

I used a great many other arguments to dissuade her from this folly; but my eloquence
was

was all in vain. She had taken her resolutions. She did not content herself with following her evil inclination, and leaving me to marry a renegade ; she would have robbed me of Beatrice too. I opposed her stoutly in this. “ Ah wretched Lucinda !” said I ; “ if nothing can persuade you, at least ruin none but yourself by your rash fury. Do not involve an innocent child in the precipice which you are casting yourself into.” Lucinda left me without making any reply. I fancied she had still some remains of reason in her, which hindered her from persisting in demanding her daughter. How little was I acquainted with my mother ! Two days afterwards one of my slaves said to me : “ My Lord, take care of yourself. A slave of Pegelin just now gave me a piece of information, which you cannot make your advantage of too soon. Your mother has changed her religion, and to punish you for having refused her Beatrice, is resolved to give the Dey notice of your intended flight.” I did not in the least doubt but Lucinda was capable of doing what the slave said. I had had time to study her temper, and I found that her having been used to bloody parts in tragedies, had made her familiar with guilt. She would have made no bones of having me burnt alive, and only looked upon it as the catastrophe of a play.

I was resolved therefore not to neglect the notice my slave had given me. I hastened the preparation of my ship. I hired Turks, according

according to the custom of the Algerine pirates that go out in quest of prizes; but I hired no more than just enow to clear me from all suspicion, and I sailed out of the port as soon as possible, with all my slaves, and my sister Beatrice. You will suppose that I did not forget to carry with me what little money and jewels I was master of. It might amount to about the value of six thousand ducats. When we were in the open sea, we began to secure the Turks. We easily chained them, because my slaves were more than they. We had so fair a wind that we soon reached the coast of Italy. We arrived very happily at the port of Leghorn, where I believe the whole city ran out to see us land. The father of my slave Azarini happened, either by chance, or out of curiosity, to be among the spectators. He viewed all my slaves very attentively as they got out of the ship; but though he searched for the features of his son, yet he did not expect to find him here. What transports, what embraces were there between them, when they knew each other!

So soon as Azarini had told his father who I was, and what brought me to Leghorn, the old man forced me, and Beatrice too, to take a lodging in his house. I shall omit the particulars of a thousand things which I was to do to re-enter into the bosom of the church: I shall only say that I abjured Mahometanism with much more sincerity than I embraced it. After I had quite cleansed myself from my Algerine itch, I sold my ship, and gave all

my slaves their freedom. As for the Turks, they were shut up in the prisons of Leghorn, to be exchanged for Christians. I received from both the Azarini's, all the good treatment in the world: nay, the son married my sister Beatrice, who indeed was no ill match to him, since she was a gentleman's daughter, and had to her portion the castle of Xercia, which my mother had taken care to farm out to a rich country-man of Paterna, when she formed the design of crossing into Sicily. After having staid some time at Leghorn, I set out from thence for Florence, which I had a mind to see. I did not go thither without letters of recommendation. Old Aazarini had friends in the court of the Great Duke, and he recommended me to them as a Spanish gentleman that was his ally. I put *Don* to my name, imitating therein a vast many mean Spaniards, who make no scruple of assuming that title abroad. I therefore called myself *Don Raphael* with a great deal of impudence, and as I had brought from Algier wherewithal to support my nobility and dignity, I appeared at court in splendour. The cavaliers to whom Azarini had written in my favour, gave out that I was a person of quality; so that their testimony, and the airs I gave myself, made me easily pass for a considerable man. I soon scraped acquaintance with some of the principal lords, who presented me to the Great Duke. I had the good fortune to please him. I applied myself to study the temper of that prince. I listened attentively

attentively to what his oldest courtiers said to him, and by that means discovered his inclinations. I observed among other things, that he was a mighty lover of jests, tales, and witty repartees. I regulated my discourse accordingly. I wrote in my table-book every morning, the stories I meant to tell him that day. I had a whole budget full of them. But, though I was very careful not to be too lavish of them, my budget began to grow empty, so that I must have been obliged to repeat what I had said before, or to let every body see that I was at the end of my apophthegms, if the fruitfulness of my invention had not furnished me with fictions: I made out of my own head several pretty tales, which highly diverted the Great Duke: and, which is often practised by your professed wits, I wrote down every morning in my agenda, the jests I should make use of in the afternoon as extempore.

Moreover, I set up for a poet, and consecrated my muse to the honour of the prince. I freely confess my verses were good for little; neither were they criticised: but had they been better, I doubt whether they could have met with a better reception from the Great Duke. He seemed to be mighty well pleased with them. Perhaps the subject hindered him from seeing their faults. Be that as it will, he by degrees took such a liking to me, that the courtiers began to grow jealous. They endeavoured to find out who I was; but in vain. They only discovered that I had been

a renegade. This they did not fail to inform the prince of, in hopes to ruin me with him: but it would not do. On the contrary, the Great Duke one day bid me give him a faithful relation of my voyage to Algier. I obeyed him: and my adventures, which I did not at all scruple to reveal, diverted him prodigiously.

“Don Raphael,” says he to me, after I had finished my story, “I have a kindness for you, and I will give you a convincing proof of it. I will make you the depositary of my secrets; and, as an earnest, will tell you that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers of state. She is the most beautiful lady in all my court, but at the same time the most virtuous. She applies herself everlastingly to the affairs of her family, and looking no further than her husband, who adores her, she seems to be ignorant of the noise which her charms make in Florence. You will easily imagine that the conquest of such a lady must be very difficult: but yet as inaccessible as she is, she has sometimes heard my sighs. I have found means to talk with her in private. She knows my sentiments. I cannot flatter myself so far as to think that I have inspired her with love. She has given me no cause to form so agreeable a thought. However I do not despair of winning her by my constancy, and by the discreet secrecy which I observe in my addresses.

The passion I have for this lady,” continued he, “is known to nobody but herself. Instead

Instead of following the dictates of my inclination without constraint, and acting as lord of my own will, I keep my love concealed as much as possible. I think myself bound to do this much for the sake of Mascarini, the husband of her I love. The zeal and attachment which he shews for me, his services and his probity, oblige me to manage with a great deal of secrecy and circumspection. I will not plunge a dagger in the breast of that unfortunate husband, by openly declaring myself in love with his wife. I would, if possible, keep him always ignorant of my passion; for I am persuaded he would die with grief, should he know the secret I intrust you with. I therefore keep these my infirmities as private as possible, and have pitched upon you for my ambassador to Lucretia, to let her know the miseries I endure by putting this constraint upon myself. You shall be the interpreter of my thoughts. I do not doubt but you will acquit yourself of this employment perfectly well. Scrape acquaintance with Mascarini. Endeavour to gain his friendship. Get access to his house, and use the means to talk with his wife. This is what I beg of you, and which I am assured you will perform with all the address and discretion requisite in so delicate an affair.

I promised the Great Duke to do all that lay in my power to answer his confidence, and to contribute to the success of his flame. I kept my word with him soon afterwards. I spared nothing that I thought might win me

Mascardini's good graces, and I easily compassed it. Charmed to see his friendship sought after by one so well beloved by the prince, he met me half-way in it. His house was always open to me. I had free access to his wife, and I may say without vanity, I managed matters so well, that he never had the least suspicion of the business I came upon. It is true, for an Italian, he was not very jealous: he confided in the virtue of his Lucretia, and shutting himself up in his study, often left me alone with her. Then I came bluff to the point. I talked to her of the Great Duke's passion, and told her that I came thither only to speak to her in favour of that prince. She seemed not to be taken with him; but yet I could observe that her vanity would not give her leave entirely to reject his vows. She took delight in hearing them, though she would not make any return. She was wise, but a woman; and I could see that her virtue insensibly gave way to the pride of having a sovereign in her chains. In short, the prince had room to hope, that, without using the violence of Tarquin, he might see Lucretia in his arms. But an accident, which he little expected, destroyed all these hopes, as you shall hear.

I have naturally a good deal of impudence with the women. I contracted this temper, be it good or bad, among the Turks. Lucretia was handsome. I forgot that I was only to play the part of an ambassador. I spoke for myself. I offered my services to the lady with
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all the gallantry I was master of. Instead of seeming shocked at my boldness, and answering me with anger, she said to me smiling; "On my word, Don Raphael, the Great Duke has a faithful agent of you! You serve him with an integrity that can never be enough commended!" "Madam," answered I, in the same tone, "do not let us examine things too scrupulously. Let us have no reflections, I beseech you: I know very well they are against me; but I give myself up entirely to my love. And after all, I do not think I am the first confidant that ever betrayed his master in point of an amour. Your great men often find very dangerous rivals in the persons of their Mercuries." "It may be so," replied Lucretia: "but I would have you to know I have more pride in me than that comes to: less than a prince must never hope to touch my heart. Regulate your conduct upon this information," continued she with a graver face, "and let us now talk of something else. I am willing to forget what is past, upon condition you never presume to be so audacious again: if you are, you may repent it."

Though this was fair warning, and I ought to have followed it accordingly, yet I continued to tease Mascari's wife about my own passion, as boldly as ever. I even pressed her more warmly than before, to make me a return for my tenderness, and I was so rash as to offer to take liberties with her. The lady growing downright angry, both at my discourse,

course, and at the Turkery of my behaviour, observed no further measures with me. She threatened to inform the Great Duke of my insolence, and to prevail upon him to punish me as I deserved. I was provoked in my turn at these menaces. My love was changed into hatred. I resolved to be revenged of Lucretia for her contempt of me. I went to her husband, and having made him swear that he would not betray me, I informed him of the intelligence there was between his wife and the Duke, with whom (to make the scene the more interesting) I pretended she was passionately in love. Mascarini, to prevent what might happen, without making any more noise about the matter, locked up his wife in a private room, where he had her carefully watched by persons whom he could trust. While she was thus surrounded with Argusses, who prevented her sending any message to the Great Duke, I told that prince in a very woful tone, that he must have no more thoughts of Lucretia: I intimated to him, that Mascarini had certainly discovered the whole secret, since he kept so strict a guard over his wife; that I could not conceive what had given him cause to suspect me, who had always behaved myself before him with abundance of discretion and reserve; that perhaps the lady herself had owned all to her husband, and so was locked up with consent to avoid addresses which alarmed her virtue. The prince seemed very much afflicted at my relation. I was concerned at his sorrow, and
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have more than once repented what I had done: but then it was too late. Besides, I must confess I felt a secret pleasure in having reduced to those straits the haughty woman who treated me with so much disdain.

I thus tasted with impunity the pleasure of revenge, which is so sweet to all the world, but chiefly to Spaniards; when one day the Great Duke being with five or six lords of his court, and myself, said to us: "In what manner ought he to be punished, who has abused the confidence of his prince, and tried to undermine him in his mistress's favour?" "He ought," says one of the courtiers, "to be torn to pieces by four wild horses:" another was for having him beaten to death with sticks: the least cruel of these Italians said, that he would only have him tossed from the top of some high tower. "But," says the Great Duke, "what is Don Raphael's opinion? I dare say the Spaniards are no less severe upon such occasions than the Italians."

Upon this I guessed, as you may easily imagine, that Mascarini had not kept his oath with me, or that his wife had found means to let the prince know what had passed between her and me. The disturbance of my mind presently flew into my face. But whatever confusion I was in, I answered boldly: "My Lord, we Spaniards are more generous. We should upon such an occasion forgive the confident, and by that goodness produce in his soul an eternal remorse for having betrayed his prince." "Well," said the prince, "I too am capable

capable of the same generosity. I forgive the traitor. And indeed I can blame nobody but myself, who was so indiscreet as to repose my confidence in a man whom I did not know, and whom I had reason to distrust after the character I had heard of him. Don Raphael," added he, "your punishment shall be this; Leave my dominions immediately, and see me no more." I retired that moment, less afflicted at my disgrace than overjoyed at coming off at so easy a rate. I embarked the very same day upon a ship belonging to Barcelona, which was just setting sail from Leghorn to return home.

I interrupted Don Raphael in this part of his story. "Methinks, for a man of your wit," says I, "you committed a very great error in not leaving Florence immediately after having discovered to Mascarini the prince's love for Lucretia. You must needs think the Great Duke would soon come to the knowledge of your treachery." "I own it," replied the son of Lucinda; "and therefore, notwithstanding the assurance which Mascarini had given me, that he would not expose me to the Duke's resentment, I did intend to be gone as soon as I could conveniently.

"I arrived at Barcelona," continued he, "with the remainder of the wealth I had brought from Algier, and of which I had squandered away the better part at Florence in setting up for a gentleman. I did not stay long in Catalonia. I died with impatience to see Madrid again, the charming place of my
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nativity, and I gratified this desire as soon as possible. When I was come thither, I happened to take a lodging in the same house with a lady whose name was *Camilla*. Though the jade had been some time out of her leading-strings, she had the most winning way with her I ever saw. Signior Gil Blas can bear witness to the truth of this, for he saw her at Valladolid not long after. Her wit exceeded her beauty, and never had any lady of pleasure a happier talent for catching of cullies. But she was not like those coquets who buy land with what they get of their lovers: had she stript a man of his business? she shared the spoils with the first knight of the industry that hit her fancy.

We loved one another at our very first interview, and the conformity of our inclinations tied us together so strongly, that our effects soon became common between us both. It is true, we did not overmuch abound in money; what we had we soon run out. We thought of nothing further than our pleasure, without making the least use of the genius we had of fingering the purse of our neighbour; but want at length awakened those talents which pleasure seemed to have benumbed. "My dear Raphael," says *Camilla*, "let us cease to observe a constancy which ruins us. You may enchant some rich widow; and I, some wealthy old hunk: if we continue to be thus faithful, how are two fortunes utterly spoiled!" "Charming *Camilla*," replied I, "you are beforehand with me. I

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was just going to make you the same proposal. My Queen, I consent. That we may be the better able to preserve a mutual ardour for each other, let us try what conquests we can make; our infidelity will become our triumph."

This convention made, we took the field. We spent a great deal of pains, without being able to meet with what we wanted. Camilla lighted upon none but fops who have seldom a shilling in their pockets; and I with women who were rather for raising contributions, than paying them. As love proved deaf to our prayers, we had recourse to sharpening. We gave so many proofs of our skill in this trade, that the corregidor had information of it; and that magistrate, who was as severe as the devil, commanded one of his alguazils to seize us; but the alguazil, who was as good as the corregidor was bad, gave us time to depart from Madrid, for a little sum of money which we clapped into his hand. We took the road to Valladolid, and went and settled ourselves there. I hired a house, where I lodged with Camilla, whom, to avoid scandal, I called sister. At first we put a bridle to our industry, and before we formed any enterprise we resolved to view the ground a little.

One day a man accosted me in the street; saluted me very civilly, and said to me: "Signior Don Raphael, do you know me?" I answered, "No." "I remember you perfectly well," replied he, "I have seen you at
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the court of Tuscany, and I then belonged to the guard of the Great Duke. It is some months ago," added he, "since I quitted the service of that prince. I am come to Spain with, I believe, one of the subtlest Italians in the world. We have been at Valladolid about three weeks. We live with a Castilian and a Gallician, a couple of as honest fellows as you shall meet with. We subsist upon the sweat of our brain. We live jollily, and divert ourselves like princes. If you will join company with us, my comrades will receive you gladly; for I always thought you a gallant man, of a temper not over-scrupulous, and a graduate in our order."

This rogue's frankness excited mine. "Since you discover yourself to be so generous," said I to him, "I will do the same by you. I own therefore that I am no novice in my profession; and if my modesty would give me leave to tell my exploits, you would see that you have not judged too advantageously of me; but I shall omit praising myself, and conclude with telling you that I readily accept of the place you offer me in your company, and shall neglect nothing to convince you that I am not unworthy of it." I had no sooner told this ambidexter that I consented to increase the number of his comrades, than he brought me to them, and introduced me into their acquaintance. Here it was that I first saw the famous Ambrose de Lame-la. Those gentlemen put some questions to me concerning the art of dextrously bringing

into one's own pocket the money of one's neighbour. They did it to find whether or no I understood the principles: but I shewed them some strokes of art which they themselves were ignorant of, and much admired. They were still more surpris'd, when setting at naught the dexterity of my hand, as too vulgar a qualification, I told them that I excelled in those cheats which require wit. To convince them that what I said was true, I told them my adventure with Jerome de Moyadas; and upon the bare relation of this story they looked upon me as so superiour a genius, that with one voice they chose me for their captain. I let them see that I deserved this honour by an infinite number of cheats which we performed, and in which I was as it were the chief manager. When we wanted an actress to help us out at a shift, we made use of Camilla, who always played the parts we gave her to admiration.

About this time our brother Ambrose was tempted to pay a visit to his own country. He set out for Galicia, assuring us that he would certainly return as soon as possible. He satisfied his curiosity; and upon his way back going to Burgos in quest of some adventure, a host, a friend of his, put him into the service of Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, whose affairs he at the same time made him acquainted with. Signior Gil Blas," continued he, addressing his speech to me, "you know how we eased you of your portmanteau at Valladolid. I do not doubt but you suspected

suspected Ambrose to be the principal instrument of that theft; and he really was so. He came to us at your very first arrival in that town. He informed us of the condition you were in, and the gentlemen-undertakers regulated their conduct accordingly. But you do not know what followed after that. I will tell you. Ambrose and I went off with your portmanteau, and mounting your mules took the road to Madrid, without troubling our heads about Calmilla or our comrades, who no doubt were as much surpris'd as you could be at not seeing us next day.

The second day of our journey we changed our resolution. Instead of going to Madrid, which I did not leave without good cause, we pass'd through Zeberos, and continued our course to Toledo. Our first care here was to put ourselves into a genteel garb. Then giving ourselves out for two Gallician brothers that were travelling for curiosity, we soon scrap'd acquaintance with very honest gentlemen. I was so used to act the man of quality, that I easily pass'd for one: and as people are generally dazzled by expense and liberality, we threw dust in the eyes of the whole town by the treats we began to give to the ladies. Among the women I saw there was one that touch'd me. She was handsomer than Camilla, and much younger. I inquired who she was, and heard that her name was *Violante*, and that she was married to a cavalier, who being already grown weary of her embraces, ran after those

of a courtezan whom he loved. I wanted no more to make me resolve to establish Violante the sovereign mistress of my heart.

It was not long before she perceived the conquest she had made. I began to follow her whithersoever she went, and to commit a thousand follies, to persuade her that I desired no better than to comfort her for the infidelity of her husband. The dame made reflections thereupon, and at length I had the pleasure to know that my intentions were approved of. I received a billet from her in answer to several which I had sent her by one of those old women who are so useful in Spain and Italy. The lady sent me word, that her husband supped every night at his mistress's, and always came home very late. I soon comprehended the meaning of this. I went the very same night under Violante's window, and fell into a very tender conversation with her. Before we parted we agreed to meet again in the same manner, and at the same hour every night, without prejudice to all or any other act of gallantry, which it should be lawful for us to exercise in the day-time.

Hitherto, *Don Balthazar*, which was the name of my princess's husband, had escaped scot-free; but I was for loving more physically, and I repaired one night to the lady's window with intention to let her know, that I could not live if I had not a private meeting with her in some place more agreeable to the excess of my love; which was a favour I had not as yet been able to obtain. But just as I
got

got thither, I saw coming into the street a man who seemed to observe me. In effect, it was the husband, who happening to come from his courtesan sooner than he used to do, and seeing a man near his house, instead of going in, walked about in the street. I was doubtful for some time what to do: but at length I resolved to accost Don Balthazar, who knew me no more than I did him. "Signior Cavalier," says I to him, "I beg you would leave the street to me this one night. Another time I will be as complaisant to you." "Signior," replied he, "I was just going to make you the same request: I am in love with a young lady, who is very narrowly watched by her brother, and who lives about twenty paces off. I should be glad to have the street to myself." "There is a way," replied I, "to satisfy us both without incommoding either of us." "For," added I, shewing him his own house, "the lady I serve lives there: we may even assist each other if either of us happen to be attacked." "Agreed," answered he; "I will go to my place of appointment, and we will back one another if there is any occasion. With these words he left me; but he did it only to watch me the more narrowly; which the darkness of the night enabled him to do unsuspected.

As for my own part, I honestly went to Violante's balcony, where she soon appeared. We fell to conversing together: I did not omit pressing my queen to grant me a private meeting in some by-place. She at first made

me a faint refusal, the more to inhanche the value of the favour I solicited : but afterwards pulling a letter out of her pocket, "There," said she, throwing it to me, "you will find in that paper a promise of the thing you so importune me for." With this she went her ways, because the usual time of her husband's return drew near. I pocketed the letter, and hastened to the place where Don Balthazar had told me he had an affair. But the husband, who plainly saw that I had a month's mind to his wife, met me, and presently asked me, whether or no I was pleased with my good fortune? "I have no reason to be otherwise," replied I. "But prithee how have you succeeded? Was the little blind god propitious to you?" "Alas, no," answered he, "that damned brother of hers was returned from his country-house where we thought he would tarry till to-morrow. This unlucky accident has robbed me of the pleasure which had so flattered my hopes."

Protestations of the sincerest friendship were reciprocally made between Don Balthazar and myself; and to draw the knot still closer, we agreed to meet the next morning in the great square. This cavalier, after we parted, went home, and took no notice to Violante of any thing. The next day he repaired to the place of rendezvous, and a moment after came I. We saluted each other with demonstrations of friendship, as false on one side as they were real on the other. Soon afterwards the crafty Balthazar communicated

to me his feigned intrigue with the lady he told me of the night before. He spun out a long story of his own inventing, and all to draw me on to relate in my turn how matters went between me and Violante. I for my part fell into the trap, and without the least reserve declared what had passed. I even shewed him the letter I had received from her, containing these words. "To-morrow I shall dine with Donna Agnes: you know where she lives. It is at that faithful friend's house where I mean to pass a few private moments with you. I can no longer refuse you a favour you seem so well to deserve."

"On my word," said Don Balthazar, "this letter promises full payment for all your past languishings. I wish you joy of the happiness that attends you." As he spoke this, he could not help discovering a sort of disorder in his face; but I was so flushed with hopes that I did not much mind the deportment of my confident, who was however fain to leave me, for fear I should perceive how much he was disturbed. He hastened away to inform his brother-in-law of this adventure. What passed between them two, I am ignorant: this only I know, that Don Balthazar came and knocked at Donna Agnes's door while I was at that lady's in company with Violante. We saw who it was, but before he got in I had made my escape at a back-door. I had no sooner disappeared, but the women recovered themselves of the fright he had put them in, and received him with such

an air of assurance, that he suspected they had either hid me in some hole, or let me escape at some private outlet. I shall not tell you what he said to Donna Agnes and his wife. It is what never came to my knowledge.

Meanwhile, without suspecting myself bubbled by Don Balthazar, I went my ways, giving him a hearty curse or two, and returned to the great square, where I had made an assignation to meet Lamela : but he came not, having business of his own it seems : the rogue was more fortunate than I. Whilst I was waiting for him, I discovered my faithless confident, advancing towards me with an air of gaiety and self-satisfaction. Up he comes, and with a smiling countenance asked me the result of my conversation with my nymph at Donna Agnes's. " Surely," said I, " some devil out of very spite takes a pleasure to disappoint me. For whilst I had the lady to myself, and was pressing her to make me happy, who should knock at the door but her husband, plague confound him ! So having time to think of nothing but how to make a speedy retreat, I flew out at a back-door, bequeathing to Beelzebub that son of a whore who had broke all my measures." " I am heartily sorry for it," (cried Don Balthazar, who secretly rejoiced to see me mortified). " An impertinent puppy !" adds he. " Gad, if I was you, I would give him no quarter." " Never trouble yourself about that," replied I. " I will do his business for him yet, and this very night too, or it shall cost me a fall.

His

His wife, you must know, when we parted, bid me not be dejected, but repair to her window sooner than usual, and she would let me in; but withal advised me, by way of precaution, to procure two or three friends to assist me, for fear of any surprise." "Never sure was so provident a lady!" said he; "I will accompany you to her." "Ah, my dear friend," cried I, overjoyed, and hugging Balthazar in my arms, "how shall I discharge the obligations you lay on me!" "Nay more," replied he, "there is a young fellow I am acquainted with, as stout as Hercules. He shall make one, and with such a guard you may boldly advance."

I wanted words to express my thanks to this new friend, so transported was I at these demonstrations of his zeal. To conclude, I accepted of his offer; and so resolving to meet under Violante's balcony as soon as it was dark, we took our leaves of each other. He took his way to his brother-in-law, who was the *stout-as-Hercules-man*; and I went a-walking till the evening with Lamela, who, though he wondered to see Don Balthazar so eagerly espouse my interest, yet did not mistrust him any more than I did. We fell into the snare hand over head. An inexcusable weakness in men of our trade I own. When I thought it was time to be going upon the intended expedition, Ambrose and I, with each a good rapier, advanced towards Violante's window; under which we found my lady's spouse with another man. They stood
still

still for our coming up, and then Don Balthazar accosting me, and pointing to his brother-in-law, "That is the gentleman I recommended to you," said he. "Do but you introduce us to your mistress, and my life for yours, you accomplish your wishes."

After some compliments on both sides, I knocked at my nymph's door, which was presently opened by a sort of a duenna. In goes I, and without minding what was doing behind my back, I proceeded on to an apartment, where Violante waited for me. While I was paying my respects to the lady, in came the two villains who followed me into the house after they had forcibly shut out Ambrose into the street, and turned the key upon him. So that you may well imagine I was forced to have a brush for it. They both fell upon me at once; but I gave them their bellyfull. I entertained them both so well, that I believe they repented they did not take a more certain way of being revenged. I run the husband through the body: upon which his brother-in-law scampered out of the door, it being opened by the duenna and Violante to make their escapes while we were fighting. I followed him into the street, where I met with Lamela, who not being able to get a word out of the women in their flight, was at a loss what to think of the bustle he had heard. We returned to our quarters, and packing up our best moveables, we mounted our mules, and scoured away without waiting for day-light.

We

We were very sensible that this affair could not end so, and that there would be made such searching as we were in the right to provide against. We went and lay at Villarubia. We were no sooner inned, but a merchant of Toledo, who was going to Segorba, puts up at the same house. So we all three supped together. This man related to us the sad misfortunes of Violante's husband; and he was so far from suspecting us for having any hand in it, that we made no bones of asking him the full and whole account of the matter. "Gentlemen," said he, "just as I was setting forward this morning, I heard of this dismal accident. They were searching after Violante, and I was told that the corregidor, who is related to Don Balthazar, has resolved to leave no stone unturned to discover the perpetrators of this murder. This is all I can tell of the matter."

I was not much alarmed at the searchings made by the corregidor of Toledo. But yet I resolved to get me gone out of New-Castile as soon as I could. I considered that if they found Violante, she would confess all, and consequently give them such a description of my person as would put them upon pursuing me. For this reason we the very next day turned out of the high road by way of precaution. Happy was it for us that Lamela was acquainted with three parts in four of the whole kingdom, and knew every by-way that led to Arragon. Instead of going on directly to Cuenca, we put in among the mountains
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that front that town, and through many an intricate path we arrived at a grotto which had the perfect resemblance of an hermitage. In short, it was the very same spot of ground where you came yesternight to beg an asylum.

While I was surveying the beauties of that charming neighbourhood, which offered to my eyes the finest landscape I had ever seen, my companion said to me: "About six years ago I passed by this place. At that time an old hermit made use of it for a solitary recess. He gave me a very charitable reception, and imparted to me what stores he had laid up. I remembered he was a holy man, and his discourse had like to have weaned me from the world. I do not know but he may be yet alive: I will see if he be or no." With this, the inquisitive Ambrose alighted from his mule, and goes into the hermitage. After some moments stay he returned, and calling to me, "Come hither, Don Raphael," said he, "come hither, and behold a very moving spectacle." I presently dismounted, and after we had tied our mules to a tree, I followed Lamela into the cavern, where I saw an ancient hermit pale as death, and just giving up the ghost. He lay at full length upon a sorry bed. His breast was covered all over with a white bushy beard, and his two hands grasped a large pair of beads. Our treading made him open his eyes, which the hand of death was just going to close for ever. After he had looked at us a moment, "Whoever ye be,"
said

said he, " my brethren, make right use of this spectacle now before you. Forty years I spent in the world, and threescore in this solitude. The former I bestowed on my pleasures, the latter I consecrated to penitence. How long, alas, how long does the one now seem to me, and how short the other ! The austerities exercised by Friar John, have not, I am afraid, made sufficient atonement for the sins committed by the Licentiate Don Juan de Solis." He had scarce uttered these words but he expired. We were struck at this unexpected accident. Such like objects will make some impresson upon the greatest libertines themselves : but it soon went off again with us. We presently forgot what he had spoken to us, and fell to taking an inventory of the things he had left behind him : which was no prodigious hard task to do ; all his goods consisting of what you might have observed in the grotto. Friar John was not only ill furnished, but his kitchen too was sadly deficient. All the provisions we found in it were a few small nuts, and some hard crusts of barley-bread, which the good man's gums were unable to penetrate. I say, his gums ; for tooth he had none. Every thing that was contained in this lonely cell, every thing that we saw round about us, contributed to inspire into us an awful opinion of the old man's sanctity. One thing was indeed a stumbling-block to us : we found a paper folded up letter-wise lying upon his table : in this paper he desires him into whose hands it should fall,

to carry his beads and sandals to the Bishop of Cuenca. We were at a loss to think what sort of spirit this ascetic could be of, that desired to make his bishop such a present. This step, we thought, was contrary to the nature of humility, and it looked like setting up for a *beato*. Though perhaps after all it was done out of mere simplicity. Be it as it will, while we were thus taken up, a pleasant thought came into Lamela's noddle: "Gad," says he, "let us even continue in this hermitage: let us disguise ourselves like anchorites. We will bury Friar John. You shall pass for him, whilst I, in the name of Friar Anthony, will go and gather alms in the adjacent towns. Besides our being safe against the corregidor's inquiries, (for he can never think of looking for us here), I have some old acquaintance at Cuenca which we may revive and cultivate." I approved of this odd proposal, not so much for the reasons urged by Ambrose as for the whim of it, and for the sake of acting a part in this farce. Thirty or forty paces from the grotto we dug a hole, and very decently interred the old anchorite, after we had divested him of his cloaths, that is to say, a plain gown which was fastened round him with a leather girdle. We likewise cut off his beard, to make therewith a false one for me, and at length after his funeral rites were performed we took possession of the hermitage.

We fared but indifferently the first day. We were fain to live upon the provisions of
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the defunct : but the next morning, before day-break, Lamela fet forwards for Toralva, where he fold the two mules, and returned in the evening laden with victuals, and other things he had bought. He likewise brought along with him every thing that could contribute to our disguise. He made himself a frock of coarse dark-coloured cloth, and a little red beard of horse-hair, which he so cleverly fastened to his ears, that you would have sworn it was natural. There is not a more dexterous lad this day under the cope of heaven. He likewise wove Friar John's beard, and fixed it to my face: my cap of brown-coloured wool helped to cover the artifice: in short, nothing was wanting to our transformation. We both of us made such comical figures, that we could not without laughing look at each other through this dress, which, to speak truth, did not over well become us. Together with Friar John's gown, I wore his beads and sandals, of which I made no scruple to deprive the Bishop of Cuenca.

We had now been three days in the hermitage without seeing man, woman, or child near us: but on the fourth day, there came in two countrymen, with bread, cheese, and onions for the deceased, whom they thought to be still living. As soon as I set eye on them, I threw myself on the bed, and found it no hard matter to deceive them. Besides the darkness of the place which hindered them from distinguishing my features, I mimicked

as well as I could the tone of Friar John's voice, which I had taken notice of when he spoke his last dying words to us. The peasants had not the least suspicion of their being put upon. Only they wondered to meet with another hermit in the place: but Lamela observing their surprise, said to them with an hypocritical air: "Brethren, be not astonished to see me here. I left a hermitage I had at Arragon to come hither to assist the venerable and discreet Friar John, who because of his extreme age cannot well do without some body to help him in his necessities." The bumpkins extolled to the skies this charity of Ambrose, and declared themselves very happy in being able to boast of having two such holy persons in their neighbourhood.

Lamela, laden with a large wallet which he took care to purchase, went out for the first time a-begging to the town of Cuenca, which is not above a league from the hermitage. What with a pious outside, which he naturally had, and the art of making the most of it, which he likewise possessed in an eminent degree. he did not fail of stirring up well-disposed Christians to bestow alms on him. He crammed his wallet with their benefactions. "Master Ambrose," quoth I to him at his return, "I congratulate the happy talent you have of begetting compassion in the souls of mankind. Let me die if you would not serve for alms-gatherer to the capuchins." "Pshaw," says he, "I have done something else besides filling my wallet. Know
that

that I have discovered a certain nymph named *Barba*, whom I was formerly in love with. I found her mightily altered : she too, like us, is fallen into the devout way ; she lives with two or three other she-saints, who edify the world in public, and play the whore in private. At first she did not know me : “ How is this, Madam *Barba*,” said I to her, “ is it possible you cannot call to mind your old friend and servant *Ambrose* ? ” “ Faith, Signior *Lamella*,” cried she, “ I could never have thought to have seen you again, at least in that equipage. How comes it that you are turned hermit ? ” “ I have not time to tell you now,” replied I. “ The story is a little too long, but to-morrow night I will come and satisfy your curiosity ; and will likewise bring along with me *Friar John* my comrade. ” “ *Friar John*,” interrupted she, “ that good hermit that lives hard by ! You jest sure ! Why they say he is above a hundred years old. ” “ It is true,” answered I, “ he was so old, but he is grown mighty young again within these few days. He is no older than myself. ” “ Well, bring him,” replied *Barba*, “ I perceive there is some waggery stirring. ”

We did not fail, next evening, to go to those pretended saints, who, for our better reception, had prepared a noble collation. We presently pulled off our beards and hermits accoutrements, and without ceremony made ourselves known to those princesses, who, not to be behindhand with us in frankness, did in their turn shew us what your hypocrites are

capable of doing, when they lay aside grimace. We spent almost the whole night in revelling, and got to our grotto but a moment before day-break. We soon after paid them another visit, or, to say better, we did the same thing for three months running; so that above two thirds of our commodities were eaten up in company with those nymphs. But a certain jealous-pated rascal who found us out, had given information to the magistrates, who this day are to send their officers to the hermitage, to secure our sweet persons. Yesterday Ambrose, as he was out a-begging at Cuenca, met one of the she-saints, who putting a billet into his hands, said to him: "A woman of my acquaintance writ me this letter which I was going to send you by a special messenger. Shew it to brother John, and take your measures accordingly." This, Gentlemen, is the billet which Lamela gave me in your presence, and which occasioned us to leave our solitary abode so abruptly.

C H A P. IV.

Of the consultation held between Don Raphael and his auditors, and of the adventure which befel them when they were going out of the wood.

When Don Raphael had made an end of his story, which I thought a little tedious, Don Alphonso, like a well-bred person, declared it had highly diverted him. After this, Signior Ambrose spoke, and directing himself

himself to the companion of his exploits :
 “ Don Raphael,” said he to him, “ consider the sun is going down. It were convenient, methinks, to consult what we have to do.”
 “ You are in the right,” answers his comrade, “ we must pitch upon some place to go to.” “ For my part,” replied Lamela, “ I think we had best be jogging on without any further loss of time ; let us reach Requena to-night, and the next day enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will give a loose to our ingenuity. Something whispers me we shall make a good hand of it there.” His comrade, who looked upon his presages as infallible, concurred with his opinion. As for Don Alphonso and myself, being resolved to acquiesce in whatever was agreed to by those two worthy gentlemen, we silently waited the result of the conference.

It was in short concluded, that we should take the road to Requena, and accordingly we began to make our dispositions. We first ate a meal like that in the morning : we then loaded the horse with the leather-bottle, and our other provisions. All this being done, and the night lending us the obscurity we stood in need of for our securer marching, we began to advance out of the wood : but we had scarce gone a hundred paces, when we discovered among the trees a light, which filled us with a world of apprehensions. “ What is that ?” cried Don Raphael. “ Are not they, think ye, some officers of justice sent to ferret us out ?” “ I rather think they are travellers,” quoth

quoth Ambrose; "and that being benighted, they are got into this wood till day returns: but," added he, "I may be under a mistake, I will go and view them: stay you three here: I will be back in a moment." Upon this, he moves forward to the light, which was not far off: he steals up to it as soft as foot could fall, and putting aside the leaves and branches which were in his way, he looks with all the care and earnestness that the thing seemed to him to deserve. He saw upon the grais, round a candle that was stuck in a clod of clay, four men sitting, having just eat up a pasty, and emptied a swinging leather-bottle of wine. He likewise perceived, a few paces from them, a gentleman and a lady tied to two trees, and a little farther off a calash, with two mules richly accoutred. He at first sight concluded that the four men must be robbers, and their discourse, which he overheard, confirmed him in his conjecture. The four rogues discovered an equal desire to enjoy the lady that was fallen into their clutches; at last they resolved to draw cuts for her. Lamela, upon this, returns to us, and made a faithful report of all he had seen and heard. "Who knows," said Don Alphonso, "but that the lady and gentleman whom these villains have tied to the trees, may be persons of the most considerable quality? Shall we stand still and suffer them to fall a sacrifice to the barbarity and beastliness of these rascals? No, let us fall upon them, and knock their brains out." "With all my heart," quoth Don Raphael; "I

“ I am as ready to do a good action as an ill one.” Ambrose, for his part, declared that he desired no better sport than to make one in an enterprize, for which they were like to be so well paid, besides the laudableness of it. Nor do I lie when I aver, that on this occasion the danger did make no impression upon my worship, and that no knight-errant ever shewed himself more ready to serve the ladies. But to speak the truth without vanity, the danger was not great; for Lamela having informed us that the rogues arms were all in a heap ten or a dozen paces from them, it was no hard task for us to execute our design. We tied our horse to a tree, and, with as little noise as possible, we approached to the place where the rogues were sitting. They were talking with great warmth, and made a bustle that assisted us to surprise them. We seized their arms before they discovered us: then firing in their very faces, we laid them all sprawling upon the spot.

In doing this the candle was extinguished, so that we remained in the dark. For all that, we untied the man and woman, who were so frightened, that they had not power to thank us for what we had done for them. It is true, they did not at first know what to think of us, nor whether to look on us as their deliverers, or as a set of new banditti, who would use them no better than the former. But we heartened them up, in telling them that we would conduct them to an inn which Ambrose knew half a league off, and that
there

there they might take all the necessary measures for prosecuting their journey to the place they designed to go to. After these assurances, which revived their spirits exceedingly, we helped them into their calash, and led the mules by the bridle out of the wood. The next thing our anchorites did, was to visit the pockets of the conquered. And then we went and took up Don Alphonso's horse. We likewise seized the rogues horses which were tied to the trees hard by the field of battle. Then taking with us all these horses, we followed brother Anthony, who was mounted on one of the mules to lead the calash to the inn; which however we did not reach till two hours after, though he had protested that it was not far from the wood.

We thundered at the door: not a soul but was fast asleep, from one end of the house to the other. The host and hostess got up in haste, and were by no means angry, that their rest was broken by the arrival of a company, that looked as if they would spend more money at their house than they really did. In a moment the whole inn was illuminated. Don Alphonso and Lucinda's illustrious son lent the gentleman and lady their hands to help them out of their calash: nay, they waited on them as their gentlemen-ushers to their very chambers, where a world of compliments were passed on both sides; and we were not a little surprised when we were informed, that it was no other than the Count de Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina,

na, whom we had just rescued. It is impossible to express how much both the lady and Alphonso were astonished when they came to know each other again. The Count did not mind it, he was so taken up with other things. He began and told us how the thieves assaulted them, and how they had seized his daughter and himself, after they had killed his postilion, a page, and a valet de chambre. He concluded with telling us that he had a lively sense of the obligation we had laid on him, and that if we would call on him at Toledo, where he should be in a month's time, we should experience whether he was ungrateful or not.

Nor did the daughter of that Lord forget to thank us for her happy deliverance. Raphael and myself judging that we should do Alphonso a singular favour if we gave him an opportunity to talk a moment in private with that young widow, we accordingly made it our business to amuse the Count de Polan. "Charming Seraphina," said Don Alphonso to the lady in a low accent, "I no longer complain of fortune that constrains me to live like a banished man, since I have had the happiness to contribute to the solid service that has been done you." "How," answered she, sighing, "was it you that saved my life and honour! Is it you that my father and I are so much obliged to! Alas, Don Alphonso, why did you kill my brother?" She said no more: but he sufficiently understood by those

those words, and her manner of pronouncing them, that if he was desperately in love with Seraphina, he was little less beloved by her.

B O O K VI.

C H A P. I.

What Gil Blas and his companions did after they had left the Count de Polan : of the important project which Ambrose formed, and in what manner it was executed.

THE Count de Polan, after having spent the better half of the night in returning us thanks, and in giving us repeated assurances that we might depend upon his acknowledgment, called up the host to consult with him upon the means of getting safely to Turis, to which place his journey was directed. We left that Lord to take his measures thereupon. We went out of the inn, and followed the road which Lamela was pleased to chuse for us.

After two hours travelling, the day overtook us near Campelio. We made directly to the mountains which are between that town and Requena. There we passed the day in taking our repose, and in telling over our cash, which the plunder of the thieves had very much increased, for we had found in their pockets above three hundred pistoles. We renewed our march in the beginning of the night, and next morning we entered into the kingdom

kingdom of Valencia. We retired into the first wood that we could lay our eyes on. We went into the very thickest part of it, and came to a place where ran a stream of crystalline water, which glided slowly into the river Guadalaviar. The agreeable shade which the trees lent us, and the grass with which the place abundantly supplied our horses, would have inclined us to stay there, had we not already been resolved to do it.

Here then we alighted, and prepared to spend the day very agreeably; but when we went to break our fast, we found but very little victuals in our budget. Our bread began to grow short, and our leathern bottle was become a body without a soul. "Gentlemen," says Ambrose to us, "the most charming retreats are not at all to my taste without Bacchus and Ceres. We must recruit our provisions: I will go to Xelva for this purpose. It is a pretty town not above two leagues off. I shall soon dispatch this little journey." With this, he laid the budget and the bottle upon a horse, leapt into the saddle, and rode out of the wood with such speed as promised a very quick return.

But he did not come back so soon as we expected. The better part of the day passed: night itself prepared already to cover the trees with her sable wings, when we saw our purveyor, whose long stay began to give us some uneasiness. He deceived our expectations by the load of things which he brought with him. He was laden not only with the lea-

thern bottle full of excellent wine, and the budget with bread and all sorts of roast fowl; there was likewise upon the horse a great bundle of things, which we viewed with abundance of attention. He observed it, and said to us smiling: "I defy Don Raphael, and the whole world put together, to guess why I have bought these things." In saying this, he opened the bundle to shew us one by one the things we had only seen in gross. He spread out a cloak, and a very long black gown; two doublets with their breeches; an inkhorn with pens and ink; a quire of fine white paper, a padlock, with a great seal, and some green wax. And when he had exhibited to us all his wares, Don Raphael said to him joking: "Faith, Monsieur Ambrose, you have made a pretty purchase there: might one be so bold as to ask what use you mean to put it to?" "An admirable good one," replied Lamela. "All these things cost me but ten doubloons, and I dare engage we make five hundred of them. You may depend upon what I say, I seldom load myself with things that are of no use; and to convince you that I was no fool for making this purchase, I will communicate to you a project which I have formed.

"After having stocked myself with bread," continued he, "I went into a cook's shop, where I ordered them to lay down to the fire six partridges, and as many pullets and young rabbits. While these were roasting, there enters a man in a very great passion, who complaining

plaining loudly against the usage that a tradesman of the town had given him, said to the cook: "By St Jago, Samuel Simon is the impudentest fellow in all Xelva. He just now affronted me in his open shop. The rascal would not trust me with six ells of cloth. Yet he knows that I am a very creditable tradesman myself, and that there is no danger in trusting me. Do not you wonder at this fellow's temper? He will trust a person of quality with all his heart. He had rather run a risk with them, than oblige an honest neighbour with whom there is none to run, like a Jew as he is! May it fall upon him double, I say, and I will warrant it will before it is long. There are a great many tradesmen of my mind."

Hearing him say this and a great deal more, there was something within me, as it were, which told me I should cheat this Samuel Simon. "Friend," says I to the man who complained of that tradesman, "of what character is the person you speak of?" "Of a very ill one," replied he bluntly. "He is a damn'd griping usurer as any this day in Spain, though he affects to be thought an honest conscientious man. He was formerly a Jew, but is turned Catholic; though in his soul he is still as great a Jew as Pilate himself, and abjured his religion only for interest."

I lent a very attentive ear to all this, and when I went out of the cook's shop, did not fail to inquire out the habitation of Samuel Simon. A man shewed it me. I viewed his

shop very narrowly, and my imagination, always ready at a pinch, produced a plot worthy the valet of Signior Gil Blas. I went to a broker's shop where I bought these habits which you see, one to play the part of an inquisitor in, the other that of a register, and the third to personate an alguazil.

"Oh my dear Ambrose," interrupted Don Raphael, transported with joy, "what a glorious idea presents itself! What a beautiful plan! I am jealous of the invention. I would give the greatest masterpieces of my life, to have been the author of so happy a thought! Yes, Lamela," continued he, "I conceive, my friend, the whole richness of thy design. You need not be uneasy about the execution of it. You will want two good actors to back you, and here they are. Thou hast a hypocritical face of thy own, and wilt play the inquisitor to a miracle. I will be the register; and Signior Gil Blas shall, if he please, represent the alguazil. The parts you see are given out already; to-morrow we will act the farce; and I will warrant the success of it, unless there interferes some of those cross-bites, which sometimes dash to pieces the best-concerted designs in the world."

I had as yet but a very confused idea of the project which Don Raphael so much admired; but at supper they explained it more fully to me, and then I began to like it myself. After having dispatched part of our meat, and given a vigorous attack to the leathern

leathern bottle, we stretched ourselves out upon the grass, and soon fell to sleep. "Up, up!" cried Signior Ambrose, at break of day: "People that have great undertakings to execute, ought not to be so sluggish." "How alert you are, Mr Inquisitor!" cries Don Raphael gaping. "This bodes no good to Monsieur Simon." "I own it," replied Lamela. "Nay, which is more," added he laughing, "I dreamed in the night that I was twitching hairs out of his beard. This is but a scurvy dream for him, is it not, Mr Register?" These pleasantries were followed by a thousand more, which put us into a very good humour. We breakfasted merrily, and afterwards fell to preparing ourselves to act our parts. Ambrose put on the long gown and cloak, so that he looked exactly like a commissary of the holy office. Don Raphael and myself too dressed ourselves in such a manner that we were not very unlike a register and an alguazil. We spent a good deal of time in disguising ourselves, and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon when we got out of the wood in our way to Xelva. It is true, there was no great haste, for we were not to begin the play till towards night; therefore we travelled but slowly, and stopt at the gates of the town to wait for evening.

When that was come, we left our horses there under the guard of Don Alphonso, who was very glad he had no other part to act in this business. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and myself, did not go directly to Samuel Simon's,

but to a tavern hard by his house. Mr Inquisitor marched first. He enters, and says gravely to the landlord: "Master, I would talk with you a little in private." The host carries us into a parlour, where Lamela seeing him alone with us, says to him: "I am a commissary of the holy office, and am come hither upon a very important affair." At these words, the man of the house turned pale, and answered with a trembling voice, that he did not know he had given the holy inquisition any cause of complaint against him. "Neither does she mean you any harm," replied Ambrose in a gentle voice. "God forbid she should not make a distinction between guilt and innocence. She is severe, but never unjust. In a word, nobody feels the weight of her anger but those who have deserved it. It is not upon your account that I am come to Xelva. It is upon that of a certain tradesman called *Samuel Simon*. We have had a very ill character of him. They say he is still a Jew, and has embraced Christianity only for secular ends. I charge you on the part of the holy office to tell me what you know of that man. Take care you do not go about to excuse him, as being his neighbour and perhaps his friend; for, let me tell you, if I see the least prevarication in your evidence, you are ruined yourself. Come, Register," continued he, turning to Raphael, "do your duty."

Mr Register upon this pulls out his ink-horn, opens his paper, sits down to a table, and prepares with the most serious face in the world

world to write down the deposition of the landlord, who on his side protested that he would tell nothing but the truth. "Well then," says the Inquisitor to him, "let us begin. All you are to do is to answer the questions I shall put to you. Does Samuel Simon go to church?" "Truly I never minded," says the tavern-man. "I do not remember I ever saw him at church." "Good," cried the Inquisitor. "Write down that he was never seen in a church." "I do not say that, Mr Commissary," cried the host. "I only say that I myself never saw him there. He may be in a church where I am, and I not see him." "Friend," replied Lamela, "you forget that you are not to excuse Samuel Simon in your answers. I have told you the consequences of so doing. You are only to tell those things which make against him, and not a word in his favour." If so, Signior Licentiate," answered the host, "you will not learn much by my deposition. I am not acquainted with the man; I know neither good nor ill of him; but if you would be informed how he lives in his own house, I will call you his man Gaspard, and you may interrogate him. He drinks now and then at my house. An eternal talker! He will tell you his master's whole life. I will warrant him he makes work enough for your register."

"I like your freedom," says Ambrose, "and I see you are zealous for the holy office, by your telling me of one who is acquainted with the manners of Samuel Simon. I shall inform

inform the inquisition of it. Make haste then," continued he, "and call this Gaspard you tell us of: but do things with discretion; do not let his master know a tittle of what has passed." The tavern-man acquitted himself of his commission with a great deal of secrecy and dispatch. He brought the servant along with him. It was just such a talkative young fellow as we wanted. "You are welcome, my lad," says Lamela to him. "You behold in me an inquisitor commissioned by the holy office to take informations against Samuel Simon, who is accused of judaizing. You live with him, and consequently are witness to most of his actions. I do not think it is necessary to tell you, that you are obliged to declare all you know of him, when I command you to do it on the part of the holy inquisition." "Signior Licentiate," replied the young fellow, "I should be ready to satisfy you upon this head, even though you did not command me to do it on the part of the holy office. If my master were to give me a character, I dare swear he would not spare me; no more will I him. First and foremost, therefore, be informed that he is such a surly old cuss there is no knowing where to have him; that he affects the appearance of a saint, though at the bottom the devil a bit of virtue is he possessed of. He goes every night to a trull that———" "I am very glad to hear this," interrupted Ambrose. "I find by what you say that he is a man of an ill life. But answer directly to the questions I shall put

put

put to you. It is chiefly religion that I am to discover his opinions in. Tell me; do you eat any pork in your house?" "I do not think," replied Gaspard, "we have had it above twice in the whole year I have lived with him." "Very well," said Mr Inquisitor, "write down, Register, that they never eat a bit of pork in Samuel Simon's family. But then," continued he, "no doubt you have lamb sometimes?" "Yes sometimes," replied the young fellow; "for example, we had a whole one last Easter." "The date is very lucky," cried the Commissary; "write down, Register, that Simon observes the pas-fover. So far good. These informations will come to something, I see.

Tell me further, friend," continued Lamiela, "Did you never see your master caress and fondle young children?" "A thousand times," replied Gaspard. "Whenever he sees a little boy going by the shop, if he is but indifferently pretty, he presently stops him, and makes much of him." "Write down, Register," interrupted the Inquisitor, "that Samuel Simon is violently suspected of wheedling the children of Christians into his house, in order to murder them. A brave profelyte this! The holy office, Mr Simon, will have a word or two with you, I dare swear. Do not imagine that she will suffer you to perform your bloody sacrifices with impunity. Go on, honest Gaspard," says he to the servant, "and declare all: demonstrate to us unanswerably, that this false Catholic is
more

more strict than ever in observing the customs and ceremonies of the Jews. Is not he one day of the week in a perfect inaction?" "No," replied Gaspard, "I cannot say that: I only know that there are days on which he locks himself up in his closet where he stays a long while." "There is the thing," cried the Commissary: "he keeps the Sabbath, or I am no Inquisitor. Set down, Register, set down that he is a rigid observer of the fast of the Sabbath. Abominable wretch! I have but one question more. Does not he often talk of Jerusalem?" "Very often," replied the young fellow. "He tells us the history of the Jews, and how the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed." "Right, right," replied Ambrose. "Register, be sure you do not forget this particular: write in capital letters, that Samuel Simon thinks of nothing but the restoration of the temple, and that he is plotting day and night how to re-establish the nation of the Jews. I will hear no more; there is no occasion for any further questions. The deposition of the veracious Gaspard is enough to burn a whole Jewry."

When Mr Commissary of the holy office had finished his interrogatory, he told Simon's man he might be gone, but charged him not to say a word to his master of what had happened. Gaspard promised to obey, and went his ways. We were not long after him. We marched out of the tavern with the same gravity as we came in, and went and knocked at the door of Samuel Simon.

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He himself opened it to us, and was very much surpris'd at the sight of three such figures as we made; but he was much more so, when Lamela, who was the spokesman, said to him in a haughty tone: "Mr Samuel, I command you, on the part of the holy inquisition, whose commissary I have the honour to be, to give me this moment the key of your closet. I will see if I cannot find there something that may justify the accusations which have been presented to us against you."

Samuel Simon, horribly terrified at these words, started two steps backwards, as if somebody had given him a punch in the stomach. Far from suspecting any trick in us, he really imagined that some secret enemy had informed against him to the holy office, and perhaps knowing himself to be no very good Catholic, he had reason to apprehend such an information. Be that as it will, I never saw a man so disturbed. He obeyed without the least resistance, and with all the respect it is possible for one to have who dreads the inquisition. He opened us his closet. "However," says Ambrose going in, "I am glad to find that you receive the commands of the holy office without being obstreperous: but," added he, "retire into another room, and leave me to do my duty." Samuel opposed this order no more than he did the first. He staid in his shop, and we all three entered into his closet, where, without losing our time, we fell to ransacking of his cash. We
soon

soon found it. It was in an open coffer, where there was a great deal more than we could carry off. It consisted in a great many bags heaped one upon another; but all in silver. We should have been better pleased with gold; but things being as they were, we were forced to be satisfied with what we could get.

We filled our pockets with ducats. We crammed them into our breeches and every where else, where we thought they would be private enough. In short, we loaded ourselves soundly, and hid our booty so cleverly, that there was no perceiving any thing of the matter; which was done by the art of Ambrose and Don Raphael, who thereby convinced me that there is nothing like being a master of one's profession.

We came out of the closet, after having made so rare a hand on it; and then, for reasons which the reader will very easily guess, Mr Inquisitor drew out his padlock, and fixed it himself upon the door. Afterwards he put the seal upon it. Then he said to Simon: "Master Samuel, I command you, on the part of the holy inquisition, not to dare to touch this padlock, nor the seal that is upon it, which you ought to respect, since it is the proper seal of the holy office. I shall be here again to-morrow at the same hour, to take it off, and bring you further orders." With these words he ordered the door to be opened, and out we marched transported with joy. When we were got about fifty steps from

from the house, we began to get on with so much speed and lightness that we scarce touched the ground, notwithstanding the load we had about us. We soon got out of the town, and mounting our horses, spurred on to Segorba, returning thanks to the god Mercury for our happy success.

C H A P. II.

Of the resolution which Don Alphonso and Gil Blas took after this adventure.

WE travelled all night according to our laudable custom, and at the rising of Aurora we found ourselves near a little village about two leagues from Segorba. Being all very much fatigued, we gladly quitted the common road to go to some willows which we spied at the foot of a hill ten or twelve hundred paces off the village, at which we did not think proper to stop. We found that these willows gave an agreeable shade, and that a purling stream washed the foot of those trees. We liked the place, and resolved to pass the day there. We alighted therefore. We unbridled our horses that they might feed, and we lay down upon the grass. There we rested ourselves a little. And then we quite emptied our budget and our bottle. After a hearty breakfast we fell to telling over all the money we had taken from Samuel Simon. It amounted to three thousand ducats. So that with this sum, and that which we

had before, we might boast of not being very much out of cash.

As we were obliged to think of getting more provisions, Ambrose and Don Raphael, after having quitted their habits of Inquisitor and Register, said they would take that care upon themselves; that the adventure of Xelva had only given them a greater relish for more, and that they were very desirous to go to Segorba, to see whether any occasion would offer of making another prize. "As for you," adds the son of Lucinda, "you may stay for us under these willows. We shall be with you again in the twinkling of a bed-staff." "Signior Don Raphael," cried I laughing, "if once you get out of our sight, we may stay long enough if we stay till you come to us again." "This suspicion is very offensive," replied Signior Ambrose; "but we deserve it from you. You are excusable in distrusting us, after what we did for you at Valladolid; and it is therefore no wonder you should imagine we will make no more bones of leaving you than the comrades whom we gave the slip to in that city. But yet you are deceived. The gang which we quitted there, was made up of fellows of very ill tempers, and whose society began to grow insupportable to us. All the world must do this justice to men of our profession, that there are very few societies in civil life seldom divided by interest than we are: but when there is no conformity of inclinations among us, our good intelligence may be broken,

broken, like that of the rest of mankind. Therefore, Signior Gil Blas," continued Lamela, "I beg you and Signior Don Alphonso to have a little more confidence in us, and to be entirely at ease as to my having a mind to go to Segorba with Don Raphael."

"But we may quickly remove the very cause of their uneasiness," says Don Raphael. "Let them have the money in their own hands. Then will they have a very good security for our returning. You see, Signior Gil Blas," added he, "I come directly to the point. By this means you will be safe; as for Ambrose and myself, I will assure you we shall be in no apprehension of your carrying off the cash. Will not you trust us after such a mark as this of our *bona fides*?" "Yes, yes, Gentlemen," replied I; "you may now go where you please." They went their ways that moment, taking with them the leathern bottle and the budget, and left me under the willows with Don Alphonso, who said to me after their departure; "Signior Gil Blas, I cannot help unbosoming myself to you. I abhor myself for having had so much complaisance as to come thus far with these two rogues. You cannot imagine how often I have repented it already. Yesternight, while I watched the horses, I made a thousand mortifying reflections; I considered that it was not agreeable to the principles of honour I imbibed in my infancy, to live with such vicious fellows as Don Raphael and Lamela; that if, which may very easily happen, the

success of a cheat should unluckily prove to be such as to bring us into the hands of justice ; I shall then have the shame to be punished with them as a thief. These images are incessantly offering themselves to my mind, and I must needs own to you that I have taken a resolution to part with them, that I may no longer be an accomplice in their ill actions. I dare say," continues he, "you do not disapprove my design." "Far from it," replied I: "though I acted the part of an alguazil in the farce of Samuel Simon, yet I would not have you imagine that I like such performances. I call heaven to witness, that while I was playing this honourable part, I said to myself, faith, Monsieur Gil Blas, if a true alguazil should come now and take you by the collar, you would richly deserve the reward you would go near to meet with. So that really, Signior Don Alphonso, I have no more inclination than you to stay in this honest company: If you please, I will go with you. When those gentlemen return, we will demand our share of the stock ; and to-morrow morning, or this very night, we will bid them farewell.

The lover of the charming Seraphina agreed to my proposal. "Let us go to Valencia," says he, "and embark for Italy, where we may enter ourselves into the service of the republic of Venice. Is it not better to bear arms, than to lead the base ignoble life which we now lead ? We shall be in a condition to make a tolerable good figure with the money

we

we have. Not that I make use of such ill-gotten wealth," adds he, "without a good deal of remorse: but besides that necessity forces me to do it; if ever I have the least good fortune in the wars, I swear I will reimburse Samuel Simon the money we have wronged him of." I assured Don Alphonso that my sentiments jumped exactly with his, and we resolved to leave our comrades the very next morning before break of day. We were not in the least tempted to take advantage of their absence, I mean to go off with the money: the confidence they had reposed in us in leaving it in our power, did not suffer us to have so much as a thought of doing it.

Ambrose and Don Raphael came back from Sergoba about evening. The first thing they said to us was, that their journey had been very successful; that they had laid the foundations of a trick, which in all appearance would be more profitable to us than the former. With this the son of Lucinda was going to give us a full account of it; but Don Alphonso interrupted him, and declared the resolution he had taken to leave them. I, on my side, let them know that I had embraced the same design. They used all their arguments to persuade us to accompany them in their expeditions; but in vain: we took our leaves of them the very next morning, after having made an equal partition of our stock, and directed our course to Valencia.

C H A P. III.

The disagreeable accident, after which Don Alphonso attained to the height of his wishes, and Gil Blas to very happy circumstances.

WE travelled on briskly to Bunol, where a misfortune obliged us to stop short. Don Alphonso fell sick. He was taken with a violent fever, with such frequent repetitions that I began to fear his life. But by good luck there were no physicians hereabouts, and so I escaped with only a little fear. He was out of danger at the end of three days, and my care set him quite upon his legs again soon after. He was extremely sensible of all that I had done for him, and as we had a reciprocal kindness for each other, we swore an eternal friendship between us.

We renewed our journey, still resolved, when we came to Valencia, to catch hold of the first opportunity that offered for passing into Italy. But Heaven disposed of us otherwise. We saw at the gates of a fine castle several peasants of both sexes dancing in a ring, and making merry. We drew near to them, in order to see their sports; but Don Alphonso little expected the surprise with which he was suddenly struck. He perceived the Baron de Steinbach, who knowing him again, ran to him with open arms, and said to him in a transport of joy: "Ah Don Alphonso, is it you! agreeable accident! While you are searched for over the whole kingdom,
chance

chance presents you to my eyes, where you were least expected."

My companion leapt immediately from his horse, and ran to embrace the Baron, whose joy seemed immoderate. "Come, my son," says the good old man to him, "you shall now know who you are, and enjoy a happy destiny." Having said this, he led him into the castle. I entered with them; for while they were embracing, I alighted from my horse, and tied him to a tree together with that of Don Alphonso. The master of the castle was the first we met. He was about fifty years old, and of a graceful aspect: "My Lord," says the Baron de Steinbach, presenting him Don Alphonso, "you see your son." At these words, *Don Caesar de Leyva*, which was the name of the master of the castle, threw his arms about Don Alphonso's neck, and shedding tears of joy: "My dear son," said he, "know in me the author of your birth. If I have left you ignorant of your quality thus long, believe that I did myself in it the most cruel violence. I have a thousand times sighed for grief at my being forced to do so; but I could not possibly help it. I married your mother for love: she was of a birth very much inferior to mine. I lived under the authority of a harsh father, which obliged me to keep secret a marriage contracted without his consent. The Baron de Steinbach was the only person I trusted with this secret, and he brought you up at my desire. At length my father is dead, and I may now
own

own you for my heir. This is not all," adds he: "I intend to marry you with a young lady, whose nobility equals my own." "My Lord," interrupted Don Alphonso, "do not make me pay too dear for the happiness you have informed me of. Can I not know that I have the honour of being your son, without hearing at the same time, that you intend to make me miserable? Ah, my Lord, be not more cruel than your own father! if he did not approve your love, at least he did not force you to marry against your will." "My son," replied Don Cæsar, "I do not intend to play the tyrant over your desires. But be so complaisant as to see the lady I designed for you. This is all I require from your obedience. Though she is a very beautiful woman, and would be an advantageous match, yet I give you my promise not to constrain you to marry her. She is now in the house. Follow me. You yourself shall own that nothing can be more lovely." So saying, he conducted Don Alphonso into an apartment, into which too I crouded with the Baron de Steinbach.

Here we found the Count de Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and his son-in-law, Don Fernando de Leyva, who was nephew to Don Cæsar. There were were other ladies and gentlemen in the room. Don Fernando, as was said before, had run away with Julia, and it was upon occasion of the marriage of these two lovers, that the peasants of the neighbourhood were got

got together to make merry. So soon as Don Alphonso appeared, and his father had presented him to the company, the Count de Polan got up, crying out: "Welcome my deliverer. Don Alphonso," continued he, "behold the power which virtue has over generous souls: If you killed my son; you also saved my life. I sacrifice my resentment, and give you this Seraphina, whose honour you have preserved. This is the return I make for the obligations I lie under to you." The son of Don Cæsar did not fail to let the Count de Polan know how sensible he was of all his favours; and I believed he rejoiced less at having discovered his birth, than at hearing he should have Seraphina for his wife. And indeed, this marriage was tied fast some days afterwards, to the great content of the persons most concerned in it.

As I too was one of the Count de Polan's deliverers, that Lord, who knew me again, said he would take upon himself the care of making my fortune; but I thanked him for his generosity, and chose rather to stay with Don Alphonso, who made me his steward, and honoured me with his confidence. He was hardly well married, when having at heart the trick which had been put upon Samuel Simon, he sent me to carry him all the money we had robbed him of. I went to Xelva therefore to make this restitution, which was beginning the office of a steward where it ought to end.



